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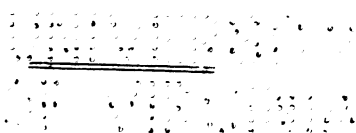
A TALE OF CONSCIENCE.

BY E. C. Agnew

"In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas."

Eleventh Edition.

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GERALDINE:

A TALE OF CONSCIENCE.

CHAPTER I.

Each in his hidden sphere of joy or woe
Our hermit spirits dwell, and range apart ;
Our eyes see all around in gloom, or glow
Hues of their own, fresh borrowed from the heart.

KEEBLE'S Christian Year.

It was the hour of sunset, as from the oriel window of her apartment, Geraldine Carrington gazed o'er the broad lands of which she was heiress. The skies poured forth a flood of light and glory. The clouds reposing tranquilly above the distant hills, formed that mysterious combination of earth and sky, so emblematic of the soul of man ; and their reflected hues sparkling in the far-stretched bend of the river, seemed, in each ripple of that moving joy, to bring beneath the feet of her who sadly mused, messages of peace, and hope, and love ! For a time yielding to these sweet influences, Geraldine leaned yet farther from the casement to look around the utmost extent of country. To the right lay the old red town of Elverton, its ruined castle and mound standing in dark fantastic outline against the brilliant sky ; and on the left reposed a deep and wooded valley, which presenting to the eye above the tops alone of the impervious trees, carried its rich carpeting between the hills, till all was lost in distance ; while in the foreground stood, immovable in majesty, the stately trunks and rigid branches of many cedars.

Along this valley, on a footpath formed on the hill-side, and far above the trees, were fixed, at intervals of some hundred yards, high whitened poles, a yellow pendant fluttered at the

top of each, and a few detached figures moved in the measured tread of sentinels along the seemingly prohibited path. Geraldine's wandering and abstracted gaze rested at length on this line of demarcation; she started, sighed heavily, some deep emotion struggling in her breast. At this instant began the tolling of the city bell, when, wringing her hands, she sank upon her knees, and cried,—“ Oh my God! I cannot die! I cannot appear before thy throne in this bewilderment of mind. Oh! cause me to know the truth, thou who art all truth. Spare me till this be clear—then take me to thyself! And oh! my God, calm thou this burning brain—send me some token of thy pity—give me back my wonted powers of mind, my courage, usefulness, my influence over others—these all came from thee. Thou canst recall them all; yet not now—not in the time of this thy public chastisement, when those who have looked up to me require them. Oh my God, I cannot cease to implore thee till thou hast answered me!”

As Geraldine half breathed, half pronounced, this supplication, there arose from the outskirts of the town a shout of mingled voices, and, as the sounds died murmuring away, another shout arose, another, and another, while a still small voice seemed to interpret them, “ Geraldine, thy prayer is heard!”

The hours now passed unheeded on, and the deepening shades of night were flung around, before the silent commune of her heart was interrupted by a kindly hand resting on her shoulder, while in a tone of tender reproach, “ Geraldine!” said her favourite friend, “ is it to be ever thus? That vigorous mind, that noble heart, are they laid prostrate at the sight of danger, and are those ties of kindred and friendship so forgotten, that self alone engrosses one who once lived but for others! Ah! dearest, when I look upon this change, I tremble for all human constancy, and think ‘truly this is a living death.’”

“ And would you see me welcome danger—death——” said Geraldine, “ give me back my ignorance, my prejudice, my blindness, and my peace. Let me think error, truth—delusion, certainty—and I will rush upon the tainted throng; will court the breath, will grasp the hand, of the first dying one, and hail the agonies which tear the frame, but free the soul to wing its flight above.

“ Your blindness and your peace, my Geraldine! Have you misled me then? Do you then love, and love unhappily?”

Geraldine smiled. "Katherine, your woman's heart cannot suppose a feeling worthy to engross its depth and magnitude, but love, mere human love! But hear *my* heart declare its sentiments; that heart of which the waywardness, the passion, and the pride, you—you alone—have known in their full extent; hear me declare my present joy, that heaven forbade my early choice; that I have since escaped all ties that could have fettered me—that I am free to follow the truth whithersoever it may lead me."

"Geraldine," gravely replied her friend, "my mind being calmly settled in its early faith, would I not gladly attribute your excitement and distress to some other cause than that of bias towards a creed, which I must ever think most dark, deceitful and dangerous?"

The heavy tolling of the bell here interrupted them, and continued for some minutes, during which the friends remained silent, Geraldine being apparently engaged in prayer. On its ceasing she remarked, "How sad it is to watch those empty forms, surviving all the intrinsic value which they once possessed. At each score of deaths within our hapless town, that solemn sound is heard—for what?—to warn the officials for mere official purposes, but no longer as the ancient 'passing bell,' when, far as the sounds could reach, the bended knee and fervent prayer obeyed the appeal to Christian charity, that souls which yet survived should supplicate for those departing hence. But Katherine," continued she with altered tone, and a joyousness of countenance and manner which, though once hers, she had of late but little shown, "Within these last few hours something has spoken peace to me—something connected with those popular shouts sent forth at sunset. How strange that having heard them, as you must have done distinctly, and repeatedly, two hours since, you have made no comment on them. This over-caution has confirmed my prophetic feeling, that those acclamations from an ignorant capricious mob, proceed from the same cause which, one short month ago, drew from them yells and execrations! Yes, Katherine, I see it is so! He who was hooted and pelted from the town, for simply preaching according to the doctrine of his Church, and the dictates of his conscience, he has now returned, because his enemies are dying of a fatal disease, and he can save or die with them. This is the devoted being heaven has sent, to 'speak peace to me,' and to say,

'Geraldine, thy prayer is heard.' " Here the first gush of tears she had known through many painful weeks, flowed irrepressibly, and relieved the tension and excitement of her mind.

"My dearest friend," at length began Katherine, "you observed to me some months ago, that our minds understood each other, as though they were parts of a whole, and grateful am I to say, that I feel this equally with yourself, excepting in this unlucky instance: but here, I candidly own, I do not sympathize; and although I admit that nothing can have been more heroic than the conduct of this Catholic priest, or more apparently harsh than that of the leading people of the town, including, perhaps, some even of the clergy, yet I cannot but lament his return. All thinking and feeling persons regretted, as much as yourself, that the very characteristics of Protestantism, liberality and benevolence, should have been forgotten on this occasion, while an opposite conduct has proved as impolitic as it was ungenerous; for in these popular excitements there is always danger of a reaction; and it is exactly this reaction of feeling that has led this stupid mob, which I despise equally with yourself, to believe that their persecution of this Mr, or, as they call him, Father, Bernard, has drawn on them heaven's vengeance in the cholera, and that his recall will stay the contagion. Certain it is, if the report of servants may be trusted, that when he appeared at that gate, where the 'sanatory cordon' begins, and simply told the group who were loitering there, that he had returned to nurse and comfort their sick, the news quickly spread, a crowd collected, and Mr Bernard was actually borne along, amid the shouts of the multitude, to the cholera hospital, where *his* advice and remedies are alone attended to. And now, Geraldine, if he but stop here, I willingly give him my meed of praise; but surely your love of what is noble and disinterested can never influence you so far as to hope, that the awful delusions of the Romish Creed shall be once more held forth to the poor ignorant creatures who surround him, and who will now be weakened by terror and disease, and biassed by gratitude?"

"I believe," said Geraldine abstractedly, "that there is one point in which all these disputing Doctors agree, namely, that whatever may be the agony of the sufferers in this dreadful disease, they never lose their senses. These poor creatures will then be aware of Mr Bernard's presence, and of his spiritual care—how merciful!"

"The best preparation for death must take place in the person's own mind," returned Katherine. "This priest may comfort his own zealous heart with fancied converts in their last moments; he may administer to them all the rites prescribed by his Church, but do you seriously suppose, my dearest Geraldine, that these converts, even if sincere, will find more acceptance before God than those poor unassisted Protestants, who have been taught to rest solely on the merits of their Redeemer?"

"I will tell you what I seriously suppose," said Geraldine, "that *whatever* Christ has commanded we are to obey *implicitly*—that we are not to conjecture, and reason, and make an allegory of it, or limit it entirely to the times of the Apostles—but we are to follow His commands to the very letter. So far, perhaps, you may think that we agree; but I begin to perceive that to our Lord's promises are attached certain conditions, while you think them wholly free and unconditional. Now, this confidence may be praiseworthy, it may be presumptuous, according as it is, or is not, conformable to Christ's intentions with respect to us."

"To what are you referring?" inquired Katherine.

"Principally to that sacrament commanded by an inspired Apostle to be administered to the sick, which we Protestants have supposed beneficial only to the early Christians, and which you seem to think of no consequence at all."

"We cannot be long in doubt," replied Katherine, "while we have our Bibles."

"How can you say that," cried Geraldine, "when we are differing at this very moment, not about the divine authority of the Sacred Book, but about its meaning! If it be impossible to doubt, while we have the Bible, why are we not agreed on the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, commanded by Saint James, seeing that we both ardently desire to know the truth, both read incessantly in the Sacred Record, and both pray for the teaching of the Spirit? Kate! Kate! tell me not that every Bible reader knows the truth: I am weary of this repeated but unsatisfactory answer; I have proved its hollowness. You know well the increased interest I took in religion three years ago,—the confidence I placed in the body of professing Christians, both in this neighbourhood and in London, and the conspicuous part which, from my zeal and my position here, I was induced to take in the various religious associations set on foot. What

have become of those Bible readers!—those I most trusted! One has ceased to pray, and now can only praise, being certain of salvation; another has joined the Baptists, being dissatisfied with ‘Infant Baptism;’ and my former excellent governess, and still dear friend, has become infatuated by the doctrines of the ‘Miraculous Gifts;’ and has even been worked upon by the frenzy of excitement, to utter those sounds which her party denominate the ‘Unknown Tongue!’ She has ceased to communicate with any of her former acquaintances, as being without the pale of the true Church, which has received baptism by the Holy Ghost; but she still yearns after me with the feelings of a sister. I have received several letters from her, and what think you is her constant entreaty? That I will read the Bible, and nothing but the Bible! pointing out to me the chapter hitherto so neglected during centuries, and reserved for these latter days, to be brought to light by the perfected Church! You know the chapter, Katherine; it is the fourteenth of Corinthians, in which there is certainly most distinct mention made by the Apostle of those very gifts of the Spirit, which, like the power of healing, the Irvingites contend would never have been lost but through want of faith. Now, Katherine, I have looked far too deeply into the cause of all this wild, unstable conduct, longer to suppose it the fault of the individuals who have so wandered astray. It is the *system* which I see is wrong,—the system of private interpretation of Scripture; and hence, however I may pity, I can never blame, its victims.”

“There has unfortunately,” said Katherine, “been too great license given of late to those who select detached passages of Scripture, and, by dwelling exclusively on them, give them undue weight over the other parts of the word of God. But do not judge of the Protestant Church by a few of its unruly members, or throw up the Protestant’s glorious privilege of taking his faith from the Bible alone, merely from the abuses which may occur from this liberty degenerating into license.”

“I do not reason on the abuses merely, Katherine; I disapprove and am alarmed even at the *uses* of a principle, which I once admired as much as yourself. And why are your reasoning faculties so obscured as not to see, that, while we are surrounded by Bible Societies, and Branch Bible Societies, this county is torn by religious factions? That the Established Church is here already in a minority; and that, not seeing the

madness of division at such a crisis, she keeps up the internal disunion between the Evangelical and the High Church,—the curate often preaching in opposition to the known sentiments of his rector, the parishes divided between them, each congregation contending that their favourite minister alone ‘preaches the Gospel;’ and then, to make confusion worse confounded, the women beginning to teach, and to decide, and to subdue by clamour, the authority of their appointed teachers! Now these refractory curates, and vociferous women, are all incessant Bible readers; and yet, even in their rebellion, they are not agreed.”

“Rebellion,” cried Katherine, smiling, “is a strong term; and now, Geraldine, confess to me, that the Church of England had fallen into a trance until these her own energetic children aroused her; and that what Wesley would have done for her, had he not been rudely thrust into dissent, the Evangelical body are achieving, namely, diffusing warmth and action throughout the inert mass. Why, then, be surprised and alarmed that some confusion and dissension take place during this process,—that pride and jealousy are irritated on the side of the higher powers, and that, on the Evangelical and reforming side, there is not always discovered zeal without innovation?”

“Yes! Katherine, I have considered all this,—and I have also felt myself under deep obligation to the party whose cause you espouse: it was from them I first learned to consider religion, not only as a duty, but as a delight, and felt a personal interest in all its glorious promises. Oh! what a happy being I was then, when I fully trusted my spiritual guides with all the warmth and confiding affection of my character! The awakening from this delusion has, indeed, been dreadful, and I bless God that my senses are still preserved.”

“And have you never consulted any Gospel minister, Geraldine, who, having remained steady to scriptural truth, would be able to prove to you that the individuals you refer to have been to blame, through want of caution and humility; and that Protestantism is not to be pronounced a faulty system on account of these bad specimens?”

“I cannot consider these persons as bad specimens of the Protestant system, Katherine. They were, they are, constant and fervent in prayer, searching the Scriptures with all diligence, unremitting in deeds of charity and love. What right have to charge these pious and devoted beings with want of humility

No! I pity, I love them, through all their fearful wanderings; for, as I before said, I regard them as victims to the system of private interpretation of Scripture."

"Is Mr Edmund Sinclair, your relative, and your parish minister, acquainted with the unsettled state of your mind?"

"But partially; for I feel that he could not help me. I know too well the state of my uncle Edmund's mind, to expect relief. Piety, and tenderness, and sympathy, I have ever found, and should find again; but how could he give me that which he has not to give—stability?"

"Then, for Heaven's sake, Geraldine, consult some party, amongst the Protestants, whom you *can* trust; try even, if you will, the High Church body, which has stability enough, if forms and articles, and liturgies, will content you. Better side with the worshippers of the 'Thirty-nine,' of the Homilies, and of the Book of Common Prayer, than rush into all the fooleries of the Romish Church."

"I shall *rush* into nothing, Katherine; and could I hope to be satisfied with the old-fashioned Church of England, I would most gladly rest in her bosom. I have often wished to consult my eldest uncle, the warden, who arrived here last week, and who is considered by his university as a standard authority in points of orthodoxy; but I have ever found the High Church party wanting in fervour, in zeal! I cannot but remember how dull I used to find religion when a child, and how interesting it is made to children in the Evangelical families."

"Yes," said Katherine, "I can never suppose that your ardent soul will be satisfied with the 'venerable Establishment! That Episcopalian atmosphere has a soporific effect even upon me, as certain as it is indescribable. Still, as you are determined to put yourself under the thralldom of the 'commandments of men,' and I have no hope of winning you over to the communion which I prefer (namely, that of Scotland), you had better consult that big-wig uncle of yours, and be satisfied with his orthodox arguments, if you can; for Heaven knows that any thing is better than Popery!" / /

Geraldine remained some time in thought. At length, starting up, she exclaimed,—“You are right, Katherine; I ought to endeavour, at least, to content myself with the Church in which I was born and educated, in which are my nearest and dearest ties, and in which I have been taught to know and love my Saviour.

Could I be satisfied within the Church of England, what conflict, what agony, would it not save me! And I have just been struck by the coincidence of the Warden's long promised visit, deferred till now, with my present unsettled state of mind; for there is no one more capable of giving me instruction than this my revered uncle. Having promised me that, in my father's absence, and for the whole of the long vacation, he would remain at the Hall,—shut up together during the raging of this disease, with an ample library at our command, every thing is favourable to my earnest wish for instruction; and my learned uncle, with his strong bent towards deep theological research, is exactly the book of reference to suit my purpose, provided that he will deign to answer a woman's questions: for, though by virtue of his creed, he must allow her to possess a soul, he often treats that soul as he would the butterfly which is its emblem.'

"Are you in awe, then," said Katherine, laughing, "of this dignified head of a college?"

"Yes, I am; but that will not prevent my giving him my confidence: and I have only to prove to him that I am not a butterfly, but a true 'Psyche,' and then prepare yourself, dear Kate, for hours and days of controversy, when, if truth be not doubly on my side, I must inevitably be foiled,—for here, like the little David, with but sling and stone, I brave the celebrated John Sinclair, of —, the Goliath of Oxford!

CHAPTER II.

But let us try these truths with closer eyes,
And trace them thro' the prospect as it lies.
The Traveller.

THE conversation between the two friends was here interrupted by the entrance of a servant, announcing that coffee and tea were served in the saloon, and that the Warden had returned from the Town Hall, where he had been, since dinner, attending the conference of the Board of Health. On descending to the saloon, the ladies found not only the dignitary in question, but also two medical gentlemen, who had just arrived from London, and whom Dr Sinclair had invited to spend the evening at Elver-

ton Hall. The conversation between the gentlemen, which the entrance of Miss Carrington and her friend had suspended, was, after a while, renewed ; and the warden, who grasped at every species of information, heaped question on question to his medical visitors, respecting the different theories advanced on the treatment of the cholera, and the results attendant on each. One of these surgeons had been appointed, by the London Board of Health, to remain in the town of Elverton, where the disease raged most furiously ; the other was proceeding farther north, having but a few weeks previously returned from Vienna, where his reputation had been established. It happened that the arrival from London of these two gentlemen, took place exactly at the time when the uproarious people of Elverton were bearing on their shoulders, to the town hospital, their former victim, and present idol, Father Bernard, the Catholic priest ; and the gentleman from Vienna, Mr Warburton, related, with much animation and apparent interest, the scene at the hospital on the re-appearance of the devoted Father Bernard. To this account Dr Sinclair gave a polite attention. Geraldine lost not a word of the narrative ; and Katherine Graham, feeling equally alarmed and provoked at the fresh interest which this incident was likely to occasion towards the Popish priest in the heart of her friend, whispered to Geraldine, as Mr Warburton's anecdotes closed, that, with respect to all this gentleman had advanced to prove the annihilation of self in the Catholic clergy, as seen abroad and at home, she could only observe, as a melancholy trait in human nature, that people were ever more devoted, and more constant to their delusions than to the truth, and that this fact could only be accounted for by regarding it as the work of Satan !

At length Mr Warburton, remembering, perhaps, as he finished his eulogiums on the Catholic priesthood, that his subject was not chosen in the best taste, when addressing a dignitary of the English establishment, suddenly checked himself, and rising, with his fellow practitioner, took leave of the party at the Hall, promising great success to the cause of life and health at Elverton, from the extraordinary discoveries of his friend Dr Newitt, whose pompously silent manner had not hitherto prepossessed the fair ladies in his favour, but who had succeeded more with the Warden, who liked silence, had learned to endure pomposity, and who, delighting in pamphlets which attacked neither Church nor State, had just been presented with the second edi-

tion of Dr Newitt's boldly pronounced opinion, that "he who was well salted could never die!"

After the departure of the two medical visitors, Geraldine wandered about the elegant and spacious room, too much absorbed by the wished for yet dreaded conference with her uncle to be aware that his eye was upon her. She passed her hand across the strings of her neglected harp, then sighed, and left it, to draw aside the crimson drapery which hung before the sliding doors of plate glass that divided the south end of the room from a noble conservatory. But there was no moonlight, and the alabaster lamps had not that night been made to shed their dreamy poetic light amongst the choice exotics. Geraldine turned from the uninviting obscurity, and, after inhaling successively all the various scents, whether in flask or flower, which lay in her uncertain and aimless course round the saloon, disturbing and playing with her sleepy little greyhound, and watching, or seeming to watch, the progress of her friend, Miss Graham's pencil, she drew her embroidery frame to a sofa, and, in a listless manner, prepared the shades of silk for her task. A sudden increase of light at length roused her from this state of abstraction, and she looked up, to meet the calm yet searching gaze of the Warden, who had raised the light of the lamp near to where Geraldine sat, and who now stood watching his niece as though prepared to address her. Geraldine's heart beat as she returned her uncle thanks for his attention to her; for she felt, by the expression of his countenance, that she had become an object of solicitude to him, and that the moment of explanation had perhaps arrived.

"Geraldine," at length began Dr Sinclair, "are you well?"

"My head throbs, uncle, but otherwise I am well."

"You are the daughter," continued he, "of the only woman I ever unvaryingly respected; and, as a child, you were remarkable for courage, both physical and moral. Knowing the advantages you have possessed of an enlightened and religious education, and the strength which can be given, even to the weakest, by a firm trust in Providence, I own I am surprised, I am disappointed, I am shocked, to see my sister's daughter sink unnerved at the approach of danger. Most true, it is an awful thing to die! and to the young, the lovely, and the prosperous, it may be hard to quit the flattering scenes of earth: but you, Geraldine, have

been better taught the nothingness of time, the value of eternity !”

A pause followed this appeal, during which the Warden and Miss Graham exchanged looks, and the latter rose with the intention of relieving the uncle and niece from the constraint of a third person ; but Geraldine held out her hand to detain her friend, saying, “ I have no secrets withheld from you Katherine. Remain, to hear me assure my uncle that it is neither the fear of death, nor the loss of earthly possessions, which causes my present distress. No ! I have, indeed, been better taught : for ‘ what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? ’ ”

“ If,” said the Warden, in a softened tone of voice, “ you are suffering from the remembrance of time misspent, and talents unemployed,—if doubts of your acceptance and salvation harass you, think of the price paid for all sin, with hearty repentance, and the God who has mercifully favoured you by membership with his pure and holy *Protestant* Church of England, will surely never fail you,—if, on your side, you be but faithful to the means of grace afforded you.”

At this allusion to her discovered interest in Catholicity, Geraldine looked up from the work-frame, over which she had again bent her head ; and feeling that her uncle had now made an opening for her confidence, which had been un hoped for, and which, if evaded, might never occur again, determined to avow at once the cause of her doubts. Yet, when she caught the softened expression of his eye, and felt how that expression would be changed at her disclosure, she became again unnerved, and, hiding her face with her hands, wept audibly ; while Dr Sinclair, but little accustomed to woman’s tears, and still uncertain from what cause they proceeded, remained patiently awaiting the time when in the natural course of things, a weeping fit might cease. Nor did he wait in vain. After an inward struggle, and an inward prayer, Geraldine met the Warden’s gaze, and firmly said,—“ Uncle Sinclair, I shall with gratitude confide in you, and receive your instructions, for I greatly need them. I have been, during the last twelve months, both alarmed and distressed by the clamour and division of opinion in the church of England. I apply to you, as a dignitary of that establishment, to satisfy me respecting her authority to decide on points of faith ; and I pray that my doubts on this subject may be satisfactorily answered.

ed: for, if not, I fear—I feel—Oh! uncle, pray forgive me—I must become—a Catholic!”

Our heroine had made so great an effort in revealing the state of her mind to the orthodox and awful Warden of ———, that, in the long pause which ensued, her excited imagination conjured up every disaster to herself that could occur. How great then was her relief, when, in a voice unusually calm and mild, Dr Sinclair replied, “My dear child, do not distress yourself by a fancied departure from your Church, or by doubts of her authority. You have, unhappily, been cast amidst a lawless crew, where you have heard and witnessed enough to have unsettled a deeper theologian than one of your sex and age could well be. I cannot be surprised that you have mistaken the reverse of wrong for right, and that, ‘alarmed and distressed,’ as you express it, by Protestant license of belief, you should feel a security in the opposite extreme of Popish dogmatism. But the moderate and judicious Church of England steers a middle course, and, with the revered Fathers of that Church for my fellow champions, I will engage to prove to you, with what judgment, with what wisdom, with what tempered zeal and solid piety our noble Church accomplished her reform, and in preserving her apostolic and transmitted authority, has power to lead her children in all matters both of faith and discipline. She was, at the Reformation, purified but not destroyed, and when thus she emancipated herself from the iron thralldom of Rome, she preserved, unimpaired, her succession of duly ordained ministers, who are the shepherds, not the tyrants, of the flock. Invested with full authority, they keep clear of all abuse; and, while the monopolizing power of the Papacy assails her on one side, and the lawless jealousy of the Dissenters on the other, the pure, holy, and majestic Church of England calmly pursues the middle path of truth! But this perfect Church is in danger,” continued the Warden more warmly. “Yes! she is in danger, and her foes are within herself. These Jansenists of the Church of England will destroy her; and she would do well, perhaps, in this instance, to follow the stern example of Rome, and cast these domestic enemies from her bosom, even at the expense of some estimable individuals.”

“Are you speaking of the Evangelical or Low Church party?” said Geraldine.

“I am,” replied the Warden. “This mistaken body, amongst

which you have so unfortunately been thrown, would confound their catholic, apostolic, hierarchical Church, with all those various sects from which she stands aloof. She is peculiar, she is alone; for, while all the Protestant communities on the Continent, and the dissenting tribes at home, send each individual to the 'Bible alone,' thence to collect, as it may chance to be, truth or error, by his correct or incorrect interpretation, the Church of England refers her sons to a standard of interpretation collected from the authority of ages. The appeal is made to a pure and holy time in the Universal Christian Church, against this present brawling self-sufficient age. No true, faithful, and humble member of our judicious Church need ever hesitate or tremble on his path; for, while no tyranny compels his choice of belief, there is every possible guidance and assistance in his search for truth. The Holy Scriptures are open to him, the interpretation of the early Church is offered to him, and these *united* form his creed. Had this double reference been followed, we never should have witnessed the scandal of these latter times, these modern controversies, which tear the Protestant world to pieces, and justly draw on it the scorn of Rome."

"Tell me," inquired Geraldine, "to what extent the Church of England carries her respect for antiquity?"

"She receives," replied her uncle, "all the primitive creeds, and the four first general councils; she submits to the common assent of the Fathers during the five first centuries of the Church catholic; and, with this preponderance of evidence, this glorious cloud of witnesses, how can a man err, but through his own presumption, or indolence, or love of notorious change?"

At this instant, the folding-doors were thrown open by the house steward, who announced the hour for the customary evening devotion in the library, where the domestics were already assembled; and Geraldine, greatly reassured and comforted by the promises given to her by her uncle, in the name of his Church, arose with Miss Graham, and, shading with her dark ringlets her still tearful countenance, took her friend's arm into the further room. The Warden followed to his seat, at the library table, where, having read the second lesson and evening psalms appointed for the day, he led the devotions and prayers taken from the Liturgy of the Church of England, concluding with the collect of the Sunday preceding, which happened to be

the seventh after Trinity. Often as Geraldine had listened to that exquisite prayer, never had she followed it with such wrapt devotion as now, when the deep and sonorous voice of the Warden began,—“Lord of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things, graft in our hearts the love of thy name; increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness; and, of thy great mercy, keep us in the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.” Then followed the blessing, after which the servants retired, and the Warden, instead of remaining, as was his custom, in the library, to read without interruption till the hour of repose, drew Geraldine’s arm within his own, and, kindly pressing it, led her back to the saloon, and seated himself by her on the sofa she had before occupied. A long silence followed, but no longer an awful one to Geraldine, who, touched and encouraged by the unexpected indulgence of her uncle, felt her naturally buoyant spirits revive, and the confiding affection of her heart flowing with double tides towards him. Feeling that, perhaps, she had not sufficiently evinced her gratitude, and the silence continuing still unbroken, Geraldine gently took her uncle’s hand, and pressed it to her lips, saying, “I do not intend, dear Sir, to give you only half my confidence, since you have so kindly invited me to trust you with all my doubts and fears. I am ready to reply to any question you may think proper to ask me.”

“Tell me this, my dear,” at length said the Warden, “for on this I have been pondering, are you perfectly sure that your late preference for the Romish Church has been a negative one only, not a positive one; that is, are you quite correct in supposing that your dissatisfaction with Protestantism would alone lead you to Catholicism?”

“Yes,” replied Geraldine, “for, excepting some few points, in which I think the Catholics have clearly the right on their side, I should be more inclined to agree with my own Protestant community, could I but find her firm in conscious truth. At present, I have only some vague yearnings towards a Church, which by some inexplicable secret seems to be never wavering, never weary—to have an elasticity, a strength, proceeding from some hidden principle, wanting in the Church of England; for this holy mother of ours seems to be struck by a moral palsy! Why is it that, at this present time, in the raging of this fatal disease, our clergy shrink from encountering its victims, whi

the Catholic priests are to be found in the midst of them, undertaking not only the priestly office, but that also of nurse and of physician, to which has often been added the burial of the corrupted corpse? Some invincible attraction seems to draw me towards those devoted Christians; but I cannot believe all they believe, unless, indeed, their apparent superstitions could be explained to me."

"Well, well!" said the Warden, "I do not wish, from party spirit, to refuse my meed of praise to the zeal of sincere and pious men, however mistaken in their creed: but we are forgetting the question of Church authority, which, if I understand aright, you are anxious to establish, but which you cannot clearly perceive to be the lawful inheritance of the Church of England. Now, to-morrow, or at any time you like to appoint, I will give you my whole attention, stock of learning, and powers of reasoning, on this point, and will engage to establish, beyond all doubt, that the Church of England has succeeded to the rights and privileges of apostate Rome, and is the catholic and apostolic Church of Christ on earth. But now," continued the Warden, rising and lighting a taper, as the chimes of the French clock announced the hour of eleven, "I would advise you to seek (after humble and earnest prayer) the repose you seem to need. Good night, Miss Graham; one might fancy you some devotee, worshipping the features you are delineating, so completely have your eyes been rivetted by the fine head you are copying so exactly."

"Not a single remark of yours has, however, escaped me, I assure you, Sir," returned Katherine, "and I beg leave to be present at the instructions you propose giving to your niece; for I own that, with my low church views and feelings, I am as curious as she can be, though not so painfully anxious, to hear the isolated position of the English Establishment, amidst the sister Protestant Churches, vindicated from tyranny and vain presumption!"

"Ah! young lady, those are bold words," said the Warden.

"They are bold because they are true," returned the dauntless Katherine, "and since I have listened to this evening's dialogue, I own myself to be less of a churchwoman than ever. I was not before aware of what the English Church assumed, but now I am perfectly astonished at her arrogance!"

Dr Sinclair nearly dropped the taper he held, and stood

perfectly astonished in his turn, that so young a woman should presume to declare, without compunction, her defalcation from the venerable establishment in which it had been her happy lot to be born. He did not, however, reply, but bidding a kind "God bless you" to his niece, and bowing coldly to the protesting and anti-hierarchical Katherine, the dignitary of the Church of England retired for the night.

"Katherine, my love," said Geraldine, as the friends parted in the open gallery, which ran around the hall, "do not vex my uncle by your Scotch objections to the English Church just at present. It is rather hard upon him for us both to attack him at different points; besides, it will puzzle the subject to my already confused mind."

"My dear Geraldine, I will promise not to speak at the same instant with yourself; for that, indeed, would be enough to distract us all; and though I cannot promise to be totally silent, I will not puzzle you away from Protestantism. Indeed, I repeat that it would be far better for you to comprehend, and embrace your uncle's opinions, than to become a member of a still more arrogant Church. However," continued Miss Graham, laughing as she turned away, "I shall think but little of your doctor of divinity, if he cannot stand an attack from two women."

CHAPTER III.

Truth is deposited with man's last hour,
An honest hour, and faithful to her trust.

Young.

Miss Carrington awoke the following morning, with a feeling of hope, of joy in her existence, which, although natural to the buoyancy of her disposition, had been damped, nay, all but destroyed, during the preceding months of mental solicitude, and, what was far less endurable, mental uncertainty.

Decision of character, and an almost impetuous love of truth, had been evinced in earliest childhood, and had strengthened with her strength, under the encouragement of a father who had fostered these qualities almost, it had sometimes been

feared, to the risk of the more feminine and gentle ones of deference and endurance: and, for the first time in her life, to have been kept in suspense without hope of relief, to have been tossed to and fro between the most opposed trains of thought and argument, was a trial under which both health and spirits had sunk. It was true, that even now she could not fix by anticipation the result of her conferences with Dr Sinclair; but to rest somewhere, to be past all doubt, and to find in religion all, and more than all, she had ever done before—this was what Geraldine now fully expected; and perceiving by her watch that she had overslept the usual hour for rising, she joyfully rang the bell for her attendant, still continuing to indulge in a species of dreamy meditation, more fraught with enjoyment than profit, during another hour. Starting up, at length, full of wonder that she was thus left to herself, Geraldine rang an authoritative peal for her neglectful tirewoman, and arose. Still no one approached, and, divided between discontent and alarm, the Heiress of Elverton, for the first time in a life of three-and-twenty years, was compelled to finish her toilet without assistance. Having at length achieved it with some difficulty, she passed from her dressing-room, through the boudoir, to a little ante-room, which, terminating her suite of apartments, opened on the gallery from whence she had parted from Miss Graham the night before. The outward door of this ante-room was locked on the side of the gallery, and after shaking it ineffectually, and calling aloud, but in vain, for assistance, Geraldine at length suspected the motive for her imprisonment. Listening with beating heart, she heard, from the hall below, the sound of voices, and distinguished that of her uncle above the rest, giving directions in his usual clear, calm manner. In a few moments Geraldine's apprehensions were confirmed, by hearing the Warden order some one to ride instantly with a note to Mr Edmund Sinclair, and, in the interval, to hoist some signal, agreed upon with the inmates of the Vicarage, to warn them that disease had broken out at the Hall. Her uncle then was safe—but Katherine!—was she the victim? Springing from the door, as she remembered another egress by which she could gain the apartment of her friend, Geraldine hastily returned to her boudoir, and, to her unspeakable relief, saw Katherine Graham rushing up the flight of steps, which communicated by a balcony with the private flower garden beneath. Several of the

servants followed, carrying the breakfast, and supporting Miss Carrington's maid, who, having fainted, was borne into her mistress's room, and laid on a sofa.

"Geraldine," said Miss Graham with emotion, "you have doubtless guessed the truth."

"Yes," replied she, "the destroying angel is at length passing over this house, and has struck some victim. Thank God for my loved father's absence, for your and my uncle's safety, and also for having spared me this faithful creature," added she, kneeling by the side of her maid, and administering the usual remedies, "for I pray that this terror may not be the forerunner of disease. Do you know any particulars?"

"None whatever," said Katherine. "I found my doors both locked on the outside, and having conjectured in vain who could be guilty of so practical a joke, I sate down quietly to read, until it should please my unknown tyrant to let me have my breakfast. The truth did glance across my mind, but I repelled it. After my patience had endured a great deal, your Mrs Kelsoe, followed by my own Phoebe, suddenly appeared, grasped my arm, dragged me down stairs, and through rooms I knew not, into the library, thence to the terrace, then down the slope to your private garden, where we met the men-servants bringing our breakfasts by an equally circuitous route. On seeing them, Mrs Kelsoe for the first time broke silence, uttered the word 'cholera,' and fainted."

"Poor dear Kelsoe," cried Geraldine, "I will not upbraid you for fainting, since you have well fulfilled your appointed task."

"She will soon recover, ladies," said Phoebe; "and if you please to take your breakfast, because I heard Mrs Kelsoe receive strict orders from the Warden, that she was to attend to that, and to every thing that would make you strong and cheerful; and the reverend doctor, your uncle, wrote you a note, besides these messages, Miss Carrington."

"Where? where is it?" cried Geraldine.

"Here," groaned the reviving Mrs Kelsoe, trying to extend the paper to her mistress, and then sinking back.

Geraldine read as follows:—"Let your faith be firm and practical: occupy yourself constantly, and be cheerful. Do not attempt to leave your suite of rooms, and your own flower garden. You will know best, as mistress of this house, how to arrange with the least possible inconvenience to yourself and

your friend. Your meals will be sent you, and I shall hope to join you in the evening. J. S."

"Oh! God grant it may be so!" said Geraldine, giving the note to her friend.

"How characteristic of the head of a college!" cried Katherine smiling, "first to lock us up, and then to beg us not to get out! Why, we cannot help being obedient, which, perhaps, is the safest predicament, after all, in which to place four women. Pray, Phoebe, who is ill?"

"I don't know, Ma'am," returned the girl, hesitating; and then added, "Mrs Kelsoe wishes to tell the bad news, Ma'am, herself."

A rapid recovery now took place from the fainting fit into which the elder Abigail had fallen. She shook her hand at Phoebe, and, on Miss Graham observing roguishly, that *her* maid had better inform them of what had passed, "as Mrs Kelsoe was still so weak," the latter started on her feet, protesting that not only was she perfectly restored, but Phoebe knew nothing except through her, having been locked up herself till brought up to her lady's room. "Not that I am yet permitted, my dear ladies, to say a word, good or bad, till you have been strengthened and refreshed by breakfast; for so I faithfully promised the worthy and reverend Warden, who commanded that my lips were to be hermit-like (hermetically) sealed, till after that essential meal. Those were his very words."

"I cannot stand this ~~tragi~~-comedy any longer," said Miss Graham, drawing Geraldine away to the table where the breakfast was spread, "and, upon my word, I know so imperfectly one servant from another, that, now I find the old alarmist is herself safe, I care not for her history." Accordingly, as the only means of obtaining the information for which she was so anxious, Geraldine sate down with Katherine to a hasty repast, while her worthy attendant, divided between real concern for what had occurred, and the important post she held, in being the only person who could impart it, sate groaning and hinting, and begging the ladies not to hurry themselves to hear awful news, while she rocked herself to and fro in the bergère, which her mistress had compelled her to retain. At length, the term of probation over,—"Oh! ladies, oh! Miss Carrington, it is the housekeeper!—she is in agonies—she is dying—she has turned quite black, and is shrivelled up to a mummy! But oh! ladies, what matters it,

you know, for the body? it is her poor deluded and perishing soul that is the great concern; and ah! it is awful to think what she is clinging to in her last moments, raving to see a clergyman, to confess to him, and to receive absolution! Popery, ladies, rank Popery! and this too from Mrs Goodwin, who always held to her Bible and Prayer Book, and who swore so by her Church, that really in the housekeeper's room one was obliged to pick out one's words, and look at them, before one dared to speak on pious matters;—and here's the end of such starch orthodoxy, ma'am! Its awful! that's all I can say."

"Oh! my poor Goodwin," cried Geraldine, "my parents' attached and faithful friend, during forty years of service. I must go to her, I must see her once again," and she started from her seat; till, remembering her imprisonment, she added, "My uncle well foresaw the necessity of constraint, if he wished to keep me from the deathbed of one I love so much. Oh! must she really die?"

"Why, ma'am, unfortunately, so long as every thing had been prepared in the house, baths, and flannels, and bottles of stuff without end, when it came to the push, nothing was ready. The servants all ran away, except the little scullery maid, who never knew what the danger was. As for the cook, she caught up a bonnet and shawl, I verily believe of Mrs Goodwin's own, and off she set in quest of the doctor, as she said; but never a bit of it; she locked up her room with all her things, and has never come back. Then the labels got torn off the bottles, and the patent steam-bath would not act, and every one got distracted; till down came the steward (for all this happened at five in the morning), and he sent off for Mr Thompson, who came in no time; but it seems that all this disturbance had reached the ears of the Warden, who rang for his own man, and in bed wrote a note for that famous doctor from London, Dr Newitt. Well! ma'am, he came too; and Mr Thompson he drew up stiffly, and Dr Newitt he began not to intrude; and the Warden, who was now dressed and down, said, 'Gentlemen, please to walk this way,' and took them into the library, to hear what each had to say. But first, ma'am, I should tell you about having a parson, which I protest caused more confusion than all the doctors put together; for not a bit would Mrs Goodwin have the reverend Warden! Such an insult, you see, Miss Carrington, and he such a dignitary! I'll have Mr

Edmund, says she, or else a stranger ; but she kept calling on Mr Edmund, and the Warden wrote, and sent to the Vicarage."

" Yes ! I heard my uncle's voice giving that order, and, doubtless, his dear excellent brother will soothe and cheer the last moments of this poor distressed woman."

" Oh, ma'am, she may well be distressed : there's something dreadful on her mind, depend upon it ; and Mr Hilton, the steward, is in the secret, as all the servants say, for he never left her, with his attentions and consolations ; and was heard to say, when he thought himself alone with her, ' Keep it to yourself,' says he, ' a parson is the last man to hear it. You've done your duty faithfully, and a faithful servant is always rewarded,' says he !"

" Well, ladies, I know but little more to say ; for, as I was afraid to go down the back stairs, I only kept peeping about for some chance news from the servants at the top of the great staircase, when the Warden came out of the library, and was at first very angry that I had not been locked up ; but when I explained my great prudence, he hurried me off in a tangent, with the cruelty of saying he was persuaded that the disease was both contagious and infectious ; so there's no escape for us any how !"

While Mrs Kelsoe was beguiling the time of its painful suspense to her young lady, by ample conjectures on slender materials, a scene of far greater excitement was taking place within the beautiful and apparently peaceful Vicarage, which was embosomed in that wooded valley described in our opening chapter, and situated just one mile from the Hall. At the hour when the bearer of the Warden's note started on his commission, the Rev. Edmund Sinclair, his beautiful wife, and four elder children, were enjoying, from windows that looked not on the infected town, the calm soft air of a July morning. The fair twin girls were busily employed in some little work of fancy, while their younger brothers were equally engrossed in raising a bridge, with prepared arches and bricks sent them by their uncle, the Warden. No lessons were thought of on that bright morning ; for it was their parents' wedding-day ; and besides a promised ride each on the pony, and sundry other pleasures, a magic lantern was to wind up the evening, to which all the establishment were invited. The father of these happy ones, having finished his breakfast, reclined in a reading chair,

which was likewise the gift of the elder Sinclair, partly following the theories of a modern theological author, partly watching the labours of the little architects on the carpet, and partly endeavouring not to hear the whispered secret between his little girls and their governess, respecting the present to be made of their work to papa and mamma, before they were sent to bed.

“Mamma,” at length cried one of the boys, who, despairing of the scientific arrangement of the bridge, was playing at a window, “there is the cholera signal put up at the hall. Come here, and look: there it flies from a high window, just over the cedars!”

The whole party flew to the window, and Mr Sinclair ascertained the fatal truth, that some one, perhaps his brother or niece, had been seized by the unsparing malady. At that instant the footman entered with a note from Dr Sinclair, informing his brother that their departed sister’s old and faithful housekeeper had been attacked by cholera,—that her mind was oppressed by some secret she wished to impart,—and that while she would not permit him, the Warden, to attend her dying bed, she called out repeatedly for Mr Edmund.

As Mr Sinclair perused this summons, his wife, eagerly leaning over his shoulder, devoured its contents. “Thomas,” said she to the servant, while she secured the note, and plunged it into a flower vase filled with water, “leave the room instantly, and desire the messenger from the Hall to go round into the garden; we will throw the answer to him from the window.” The man obeyed. “Edmund,” continued she, turning to watch the expression of her husband’s countenance, “you are not mad enough to listen to your brother’s selfish suggestion? You surely do not believe one word of the old woman’s preference for *you*?”

“And why not?” replied Mr Sinclair; “I am her parish priest, she naturally turns to me. I have held this living, the gift of General Carrington, nine years, during which time his household have constantly attended my ministry,—they have, therefore, a claim on me for the last consolations of religion.”

“Good heaven!” exclaimed his wife, “do you actually think of putting yourself in the way of certain death?”

“I must leave consequences in the hand of God,” replied he, solemnly; “and now, my dearest Charlotte, let me entreat you not to place these constant obstacles in the way of my obvious duty. Do not forget, as, alas! you have too often done, that

in marrying one of my holy profession, you bind yourself to assist, not to retard, your husband, in his vocation."

"I cannot listen to preaching now, Edmund," interrupted his wife, becoming extremely agitated. "Answer me plainly,—'Yes,' or 'No,'—do you mean to go to the Hall?"

"I do!" replied he, and rushed to the door; but his wife had anticipated him, and, turning the lock, placed the key in her bosom, and sank on her knees before him.

"Charlotte, my love, I cannot submit to this,—I cannot be detained," cried the husband. "Is it not enough to have prevented every personal effort I would have made amongst the sick and dying poor, but that you would force me to deny the last request of a faithful though humble friend? Charlotte, recollect yourself,—exert more Christian strength of mind, or you lose yourself in my regard."

"And what is an old servant, what is a friend, compared to your wife, to your children? What claim can equal theirs? And how can you answer to your conscience the bringing back to us this fatal malady?"

"God will preserve my family," replied Edmund Sinclair, trembling with emotion. "My own Charlotte, think of the vows I have taken as a Gospel minister; and remember that, if unfaithful to them, I can never expect Divine assistance."

"I know not what were your vows as a clergyman, Edmund, for I never heard them,—I only know what they were as a husband; and, by those remembered vows I hold you fast. I will not let you go. Is it thus you would 'love and cherish' me 'till death do us part?' Is it thus you would desert the devoted mother of your children, or return to destroy her?"

Mr Sinclair here endeavoured to raise her, fondly kissing the hand he held, but at the same time turning his eyes towards the window, whence escape was perfectly feasible. Mrs Sinclair, however, caught the direction of his looks and thoughts, and, throwing her arms around him, burst into tears; while, as the wondering and tearful children gathered round them, the governess ventured to suggest, that, "if the Warden or Miss Carington had sent for Mr Sinclair, it would have been painful to have refused them, but that this old woman was no relation."

Mr Sinclair sighed as he replied,—"Every soul is of equal value in the sight of God, and with Him all men are brothers. To the inmates of the Hall I have bound myself as their pastor

before God. My own love, be reasonable, be more than reasonable ; be full of faith and trust, and the Master whom I serve will protect me and comfort you."

" Oh ! Edmund, for God's sake do not go on talking to me in those set phrases ! I know very well what the obvious duties of a clergyman are ; and I am certain that carrying about the infection from house to house, is not one of them. It is your duty to obey the Government, and the Board of Health has officially commanded that the contagion should not be thus conveyed. You know all this very well, Edmund, I read you the announcement myself from the newspaper ; and you also know the dissatisfaction that was expressed because the Roman Catholic priests would not obey the law of the land."

" Not the law of the land, Charlotte ; no punishment could attend its infraction : but now listen. I must go up to the Hall, but I will not return here immediately. I will pass the night at the lodge, and then change my dress."

" And there die," interrupted the wife, " and see me die there, and the one yet unborn ! Yes ! kill us both at once, and then be satisfied that you have well fulfilled your ordination vows ! Go ! go !" cried she, with hysterical vehemence ; " go ! you love me not,—you never did, and you shall never see me more !"

Accustomed, as he had long been, to similar scenes, whenever bent on the fulfilment of those clerical functions in which danger to himself might be dreaded, Edmund Sinclair had never been so powerfully affected, even during the first months of his marriage. This beautiful and devoted creature had passionately thrown herself at his feet, and her sobs echoed in his heart : he thought, also, on this their anniversary.

The children, fully understanding that their mother was in distress, and their father in danger, joined their lamentations to hers, each little hand fastening on his dress, to force him to remain in safety, while the gentle governess again expostulated : " Surely, Mr Sinclair, these dear ones have the first claim on you. Excuse me, if I take the liberty to think you have, in this case, mistaken the line of duty. God can never bid you forget that you are a husband and a father."

Mrs Sinclair had now ceased to sob and lament ; but it was not that she listened to this last appeal in her favour, for her frame, incapable of longer sustaining this highly-wrought state

of feeling, sank heavily on the floor, and her rebellious grief was lost in forgetfulness.

"Great God!" cried the agonized husband, as, disengaging himself from the children, he raised his apparently lifeless victim, and bore her to a couch. "Thou canst not demand the annihilation of these very affections which thou thyself hast blessed. Charlotte, my best treasure, I quit you not. Miss Rigby, tell the messenger from the Hall that Mrs Sinclair is too ill for me to leave her, that I send my best wishes and my blessing to poor old Goodwin, and that I entreat she will have no human preferences at such a crisis, but consent to see my excellent brother the Warden. And take the children away, Miss Rigby: I wish to be left with my wife."

"I cannot, Sir," replied that lady, "the door is, you know, locked; and even, while fainting, Mrs Sinclair still grasps the key."

Tears gushed into Edmund's eyes as he drew forth his Charlotte's now unresisting hand from the folds of her dress: it fell powerless, and dropped the key. The governess and children withdrew; and, no sooner was he freed from witnesses, than sinking on his knees, by the couch of his still insensible wife, and burying his face in the cushions, Edmund Sinclair gave way to the remorseful emotions of his soul,—for he had yielded to the enervating effect of earthly love, and, in the husband, lost the priest of God!

CHAPTER IV.

Ye, who in place of shepherds true,
Come trembling to their awful trust.

Keeble.

IN the mean time, the library at Elverton Hall presented a scene of, perhaps, too frequent recurrence, that of a prolonged discussion between the arbitrators, humanly speaking, of life and death; while every five minutes, thus wasted, diminished the probability of rescue for the object of their punctilio. In fact, it happened unfortunately for the poor old housekeeper's existence, that each of the medical men, summoned to prescribe, was the marked leader of a totally opposed system, with this addi-

tional obstacle to agreement, that one practitioner, being the cleverest of the clever at Elverton, was defender of the cause of provincial talent ; while the other felt and showed the full importance of representing the London Board of Health, whence he had been sent with delegated power. Each was stout-hearted. Mr Thompson, resisting innovation, adhered to hot flannels, brandy, and laudanum ; while, inspired by the genius of discovery, Dr Newitt pronounced on the saline particles to be reproduced in the blood. While the discussion was at its full height, and the Warden, to whom college etiquette had taught endurance, was standing between the bowing opponents, armed, in one hand, with a mixture of Mr Thompson's, and, in the other, with the pamphlet of Dr Newitt, the messenger returned from the Vicarage, conveying the answer to the Warden's note. This sudden and violent illness might have caused some alarm that the scourge of cholera had attacked the vicar's lady ; but the Warden merely uttered, " Woman ! woman : " and, with characteristic rapidity, despatched one of the carriages, with an urgent note to the rector of the next parish, desiring that all speed might be used.

Another hour passed, during which the learned doctors, after bowing and expressing to each other all that politeness could suggest, went each to visit the sufferer, to whom had already been applied the " old-fashioned " remedies of the family adviser, Mr Thompson. The hand of death was evidently on her ; but, during the most violent convulsions, the distress of her mind was ever supereminent, and inspired the utmost pity and awe in the few who ventured near her. She expressed the greatest dread of death, until she should have seen a clergyman ; yet the mention of the Warden agitated her beyond measure ; and once, regardless of the signs and whispers of the steward, who never left her, she cried out,— " Don't talk to me of him,—he is no friend of General Carrington's,—and shall I give occasion to *him* against my noble master ? " These words were not forgotten by the servants.

The gentlemen were again met in the library ; and the delicate question had been opened, whether, as Mr Thompson could not save the patient, Dr Newitt should, when the Rev. Mr Thornhill was introduced, more perplexed, and infinitely more alarmed, than any of the party. " My dear Sir," said this gentleman, addressing the Warden, " I have, you see, complied

with your urgent note : I did not keep your carriage a minute. I got in without the knowledge of my family. I have done my best ; but really it struck me, coming along, (at an immensely quick pace by-the-bye) to inquire of these learned gentlemen their opinion respecting the contagiousness of this disease : for I should not consider it my duty towards Mrs Thornhill, and my daughter,—in short, gentlemen, contagion or non-contagion, which is it ?” The learned men, well aware how much on this point, also, they differed, bowed to each other to reply, while the rector turned from one to the other, awaiting the end of this official politeness. “ Sir,” at length replied Dr Newitt, “ if you have read my pamphlet ;”—“ But I have not, Sir,—I have not : I never knew that you had written a pamphlet. I should be particularly obliged by your opinion *viva voce* ; not for any dread I have individually,—on the contrary ; but as a question of importance generally. . We will look upon it, Sir, as an abstract question, whether by touch, or breath, or noxious effluvia.” “ Mr Thornhill,” interrupted the Warden, rather sternly, “ I must lament that caprice, or aversion, or some inexplicable cause, prevents my being allowed by this poor woman to hear her burdensome secret, and give her absolution ; but thus debarred, allow me to suggest that, without further delay, I should conduct you to her death-bed, while you shall be provided with every possible antidote against the danger you thus brave.”

“ Thompson ! my worthy friend,” cried the confessor “ *malgré lui*,” as he walked sideways after the Warden, “ you used to take the strongest snuff of any of my acquaintance.” “ Oh ! my good Sir,” exclaimed Dr Newitt, “ snuff is a prejudice which”—but the Warden, by the aid of a powerful arm, bearing off his clerical brother, the question of “ snuff,” with all its fellow-questions, remained behind in the library with the men of science.

Towards evening, after intense suffering, and in spite of the active remedies that were at length applied, the poor old house-keeper breathed her last ; and, according to the rules laid down by the authorities, the body was immediately conveyed to some newly-consecrated ground without the town. The Rector had been very kind to the afflicted woman, and far less alarmed when actually facing the danger, than when there remained a possibility of escape. He remained several minutes alone with her ;

after which, calling back her faithful friend, the steward, Mr Thornhill administered the Sacrament to his dying communicant, and took leave of the Hall, to return on horseback to the Rectory, conceiving this plan the safest, from the purification his dress would receive from the open air. Scarcely had the worthy Rector arrived at home, when Mrs Thornhill, who had wisely been kept in ignorance of the motive of her husband's morning excursion, but whose curiosity had thereby received an impetus not to be allayed either by soothing or authority, having learned at length the object of his pastoral visit, now opened a succession of skirmishing attacks, respecting "what the old woman could possibly have said to him;" which attacks, during the day, were followed up, after dinner, by a general engagement, so admirably conducted, that the honest Rector's tactics were at length completely foiled, and the secret of his penitent's confession taken from him, to his infinite surprise, vexation, terror, and remorse! "My dear," said he, at length, endeavouring to re-assure himself, "I feel convinced of your discretion!" Mrs Thornhill drew up with dignity, and expressed herself with such caution and propriety, that the Rector, almost satisfied, withdrew to his study; when the lady, joining an intimate and dear friend, at the house of a third confidante, of whose "discretion" she "felt convinced," indulged herself and them by imparting, under promise of inviolable secrecy, the important and wonderful disclosure which had been made on that eventful morning.

"And how have you passed these tedious hours?" inquired Dr Sinclair, as, to the joy of his fair prisoners, he visited them early in the evening, and established himself in the easy chair appropriated to him in Geraldine's boudoir. "I fear that you have been anxious, and annoyed by various rumours, without the power of ascertaining the truth."

"We have, indeed, longed for your promised visit, my dear uncle," said Geraldine; "for many have been the wild stories brought by the servants to Kelsoe, which have not lost their vivid colouring by passing through her fanciful head. I have heard, amongst other things, that, during the interval, when poor Goodwin despaired of seeing a clergyman, she uttered many things, both painful and mysterious, connected with her absent master."

"My dear girl," replied the Warden, "you must be prepared

for hearing every absurd report possible concerning those vague, and, doubtless, delirious, words of your poor housekeeper; and you must be prepared, also, to disbelieve and cast scorn upon them all."

"Fear nothing respecting my peace of mind," returned Geraldine; "for if you, uncle, disbelieve every thing that could tarnish the bright name of General Carrington, so much more should his daughter. Sooner could the gentle zephyr uproot that mighty cedar grove, than this passing breath of calumny shake my trust in him."

"For my part," observed Miss Graham, "I should be sorely tempted to end this mystery about nothing, by just asking Mr Thornhill what the poor bewildered old creature did say?"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Geraldine, "never glance, I beseech you, even in thought, at such a thing. Where would be the sacred confidence between the minister of God and the dying penitent, if, to ease every curious and impatient inquirer, the secrets of the death-bed were to be disclosed?"

"I cannot but feel, however," continued her friend, "that the General's spotless honour is of far more consequence than a mere scruple of delicacy; for who can believe any sacredness to be attached to the last words of one who was either malicious or deranged?"

"Geraldine is right," observed the Warden. "The last words of any dying penitent should be a sacred deposit in the ear of the minister; and although we do not, in the Church of England, hold this secrecy to be of sacramental obligation, as do the Romish priests, yet an early canon of our Church, bearing date 1608, enjoins the priest not to make known to any one what has been revealed to him; and, whether enjoined or not, it must ever be binding to a mind of honour and rectitude."

"My dear uncle," said Geraldine, "my chief occupation, during this long, sad day, has been the study of my Book of Common Prayer, my previous ignorance of which has been shared by all our little party, with the usual attendant on ignorance, namely, a full persuasion of our own knowledge. My maid, Kelsoe, who vaunts herself to be a 'good Church woman,' could not be persuaded but that poor Goodwin had turned 'at least half Papist,' because she could not die in peace without having made a full confession of her sins, and received priestly absolution. Katherine and I then searched for the office

for the 'Visitation of the Sick,' and I own that I was as much astonished as she was, though not so much shocked, at the absolute authority with which the minister pronounces absolution. We then turned to the 'Ordination Service,' which is, indeed, most awful. What immense spiritual gifts are there bestowed on the newly-made priest! Yet Scripture fully warrants all parts of the service, and especially the Apostolical imposition of hands, for conveying the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit."

"Read aloud that part of the service," said the Warden; and Geraldine, opening the large Prayer Book, which contained the solemn rite, read thus:—"The candidate kneels while the bishop solemnly invokes on him the Holy Ghost, that this Holy Spirit may impart to the new priest his seven-fold gifts!" "But here," continued Geraldine, turning over the page, "here is the part where there is nothing vague,—nothing that can be explained away. After the bishops, with the other priests, have laid their hands severally upon the head of every one who receives the order of priesthood, the receiver, humbly kneeling on his knees, the bishop says,—'Receive ye the Holy Ghost, for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed to thee by *the imposition of our hands*: whose sins *thou* dost forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins *thou* dost retain they are retained; and be thou a faithful dispenser of this Holy Sacrament. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.—Amen.'

"When we had finished reading this awful service," continued Geraldine, "with all the Scriptural references for which we searched, and then returned to the 'Visitation of the Sick,' I was no longer startled by the authority with which the minister pronounces"——

"Read first," interrupted the Warden, "what the Rubric directs."

Geraldine obeyed. "Here shall the sick person be moved to make a special confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. After which confession, the priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and heartily desire it) after this sort:—'Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of his great mercy absolve thee thine offences. And, by His authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy

sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.—Amen.’

“ Now explain to me, uncle,” said Geraldine, as she closed the Prayer Book, “ why, if the Church of England has retained the power originally granted by Christ to his Church, her clergy seem to shrink from owning and using this delegated power, so that our laity are, for the most part, ignorant of the doctrine of their Church on this point ; and, while they rail at the Catholic priests for usurping the power which belongs to God alone, are unconsciously condemning their own ministers ? ”

“ Come ! my dear Sir,” cried Katherine, “ confess the truth, that the clergymen of the Church of England are all heartily though secretly ashamed of these remains of Popery in their half-reformed Church.

“ Miss Graham,” returned the Warden, “ I repeat, that the Church, at the Reformation, was purified, not destroyed. These gifts, transmitted in ordination, are retained as verities by the orthodox ministers of the Church of England,—those whom you are pleased to call ‘ High Church ; ’ but your friends, the Evangelicals, who disregard the authority which conveyed to them their sacred powers, entertain very loose opinions on the subject of priestly absolution.”

“ But, uncle,” said Geraldine, “ I cannot see why this confession and absolution, so plainly enforced by our Church, should be always deferred to the death-bed of the penitent ? There must often occur, in the life of every one, difficulties, and trials, and temptations ; and if his conscience be in trouble too hard to endure, why can he not unburthen his labouring mind to his clergyman, and receive, if truly penitent, the assurance of pardon, without waiting for the hour of death, when the memory often fails, or becomes distorted, as in the case of poor Goodwin ? ”

“ Hand me your prayer-book, my dear,” said Dr Sinclair, “ and I will point out to you that which you ought, indéed, to have already known, that to those, who desire to attend the Holy Communion, there is an express invitation given, on the Sunday before, from the altar, to open their minds in private to their minister. ‘ Therefore, if there be any of you who cannot quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth farther comfort or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned minister of God’s word, and open his grief, that, by the minis-

try of God's holy word, he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness."

"I am, indeed, ashamed," replied Geraldine, "not to have remembered this; for I believe I must have heard these words given out occasionally at church. Never having, however, been led to a practical application of their meaning, I had forgotten them; and accustomed as I have been, in my uncle Edmund's congregation, to witness the most kind and intimate intercourse between them and their pastor, still I am convinced, there is not one individual amongst them but would shrink from what they would term the 'unscriptural' notion of private absolution; while Edmund himself, in his humility, would never dare to confer it."

"Your uncle Edmund," cried the Warden, vehemently, "does more to pull down his Mother Church, by his dread or neglect of her holy observances, his low view of the priesthood, and his condescensions to the dissenters, than if he were a mere stick in office. The contents of his library proclaim the indecision of his mind, and are enough to distract the faith of an Apostle. Had those shelves been filled with the works of Barrow, Hooker, Hammond, South, Peirson, Mede, and Taylor, those glories of the Established Church, he would have been led by them to reverence antiquity; to consult, with them, the bishops, martyrs, and ecclesiastical writers of the first ages, and to shun these modern innovators, these Calvinistic levellers of the day!"

"Well, dear uncle," interrupted Geraldine, pleadingly, "we will not speak just now of Edmund. Holy and zealous though he be, I prefer, when in doubt, to apply to you. I think that all the warnings, and all the encouragements, given on the approach to the Holy Sacrament, are most beautiful and edifying; and I particularly like what you have just read. Still, I think it a pity that this previous communication with our appointed minister is only recommended, not enforced."

"It is not in the benevolent nature of our Church to force the mind," replied her uncle,—“she wins, guides, instructs; and, as I have before said, her ministers are the shepherds, not the tyrants, of their flock.”

"But, if it were for my soul's good, I should wish to be compelled," said Geraldine. "I should feel it then to be no more than any other observance of my Church."

"As for private absolution," observed Miss Graham, "depend upon it, it has died a natural death, being too weak to live; and that public absolution is also in its dotage, may be very well perceived by any one at all acquainted with the tacit reform, which is gradually taking place, in these more enlightened days, in the State Establishment of England."

"Miss Graham," said the Warden, gravely, "may I take the liberty to inquire, whether you are a member of the Established Church of England, or whether, as your Scotch name denotes, the National Kirk of the sister kingdom claims your allegiance?"

"Indeed, Sir," replied the young lady, "you may well make that inquiry, after the warmth I displayed last night on the subject of Church authority, a warmth for which, perhaps, I think I ought to apologise, my words having been addressed to a dignitary of the establishment I condemned."

"Enough! enough!" said the Warden, holding out his hand in token of forgiveness; "I too was ruffled; yet I like freedom of discussion; for from the clash of opinions truth is elicited. And should you belong to a Church which has cut itself off from apostolic descent, and has thrown off the decent and venerable forms which we of England retain, I shall then argue with you more by reason, and less by authority than I should employ, were you a member of my own respectable establishment."

"The truth is," replied Katherine, much amused by the Warden's high tone of treating both the Kirk and herself, "that I might belong to which community I pleased, either English or Scotch Church, without the guilt of change or schism. My father, and all my relations on his side, are Presbyterians, but I have been educated in the externals, I cannot call them the principles, of the Church of England."

"And why not the principles, Miss Graham?"

"Because, Dr Sinclair, I really never knew what they were, till this evening."

"With your prayer-book in your hand, this is a strange confession," returned the Warden.

"But, uncle," interrupted Geraldine, "pardon me if I put in my claim to your first thoughts and explanations; for Katherine is happy in her opinions, vague as they are, while I am looking forward to your arguments, as though you were to plead in a matter of life and death."

"Fear not that I shall forget you, dear girl, or that you are not ultimately concerned in every thing I may explain to your friend; for although in the arguments I propose holding with her, I shall have but little to do with Rome, yet, as the authority of our church will be the question, this will interest and benefit you as well as Miss Graham. She calls in question the principle of Church authority: you seem anxious to establish the principle, but to question its appropriation by the Church of England. Now, you will own, that the first part of the argument lies with your independent friend here, to whom I shall be happy to devote myself to-morrow, after the breakfast to which I now invite myself every morning."

CHAPTER V.

As long as words a different sense will bear,
 And each may be his own interpreter,
 Our airy faith will no foundation find;
 The word's a weather-cock for ev'ry mind.

Dryden.

"Good morning, my dear uncle," "Good morning, Warden," cried the two expectants in the balcony of Geraldine's boudoir, overlooking the flower garden, whence the learned and reverend gentleman was seen slowly advancing on the following morning, with a folio volume beneath his arm. He returned the greeting, and, ascending the steps to the favourite apartment, was soon seated between his fair antagonists, while a truce was agreed upon during the cheerful and friendly repast. Dr Sinclair, however, seemed not unwilling to renew the discussions of the previous day; and, after the servants had finished their attendance, and the ladies had fixed upon their employment for the morning, he threw out the challenge for attack to Katherine Graham, by saying, "Pray, Miss Graham, what is your notion of church?"

Katherine looked up and smiled: "Why, Dr Sinclair, I think, with my favourite Chalmers, that Scripture says marvellously little about a church!"

"Ah! where does Chalmers say this?"

"I heard him preach at the Scotch Church in London, and I repeat his very words."

"Dr Chalmers," said the Warden, "is a man of learning, of wisdom, of piety, and of eloquence: but I never yet knew the

Calvinist who could go to his Bible without a sturdy independent resolution to see nothing there but what should suit his own play of doctrine. Hand me a Bible, Geraldine, and I will show Miss Graham that Scripture says 'marvellously *much* about a Church.' "

"Stop, Sir," said Katherine, "and first understand both Dr Chalmers and myself. You will find the *word* 'church' often recurring in Scripture; no Bible reader thinks of denying that. But I attribute to it a far different signification from yours. I conceive the Church of Christ to be wholly spiritual; for Christ says, the 'Kingdom of Heaven is within you.' I believe that, under whatsoever denomination, and belonging to whatever outward community, all those who have the spirit of Christ are Christians, and form his pure invisible Church."

"Miss Graham, you believe *a* truth, but not *the* truth; or, in other words, you believe the truth, but not the *whole* truth. You should remark that, from the defective nature of all language, the word 'church' is employed in various significations. It means, primarily, the whole visible body of professing Christians; secondly, the heads or pastors of that body; thirdly, the spiritual or elected portion of the visible body; fourthly, the different congregations, separated, though in communion; and also, in modern acceptation, the buildings dedicated to the purposes of prayer and instruction. Our Divine Redeemer often speaks, it is true, of his pure and elect Church, and, in this sense, it is wholly spiritual and invisible; but again, he gives commands and promises totally incompatible with an invisible and merely spiritual Church. For instance, what are we to understand by the following texts:—'Hear the Church.'—'If he neglect to hear the 'Church,' let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican.' Then to the pastors themselves,—'Feed the flock which is amongst you, taking the oversight thereof.'—'And the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.'—'Ye are as a city set on a hill.' There is no necessity for me to multiply text upon text, I should suppose, Miss Graham, farther to prove the obvious necessity of Christians being a visible body, and that, if the Church is 'as a city set on a hill,' she must be not only visible, but conspicuous!"

"I perceive, Dr Sinclair," said Katherine smiling, "that you have endeavoured to make your few but weighty texts serve you

the double purpose of proving the authority as well as the visibility of the Church. Certainly, those who command and those who obey, as well as those who speak and those who listen, must be visible living men and women ; but as to any authority of one Christian over another, excepting the necessary influence of piety and learning, I own I cannot yet admit it either in theory or practice."

" Yet you read of churches being ' established' or ' confirmed,' " replied Dr Sinclair ; " which denotes the settlement of such rules and regulations as were called for by the increasing number of the Christians : and as the Apostles themselves could not always be present, it was necessary that some one having authority should be with each community, to set things in order. This one person must have been appointed by the Apostles ; for there is no evidence of a deacon or elder taking upon himself such an office in these early times, unless appointed by an Apostle, or by some one who had himself received his commission from an Apostle. . This appointment was made by the laying on of hands, and has continued in the Church down to this day. Now, respecting the ' Church,' as signifying those in spiritual authority, you will perceive that our Lord did not grant ministerial authority to his disciples in general, but first to twelve, and then to seventy ; that of those twelve, one was among the most wicked of mankind, and that our Lord well knew his character when he appointed him ; that possibly some of those seventy might be unworthy persons ; that our Lord, just before his departure, gave what may be called a fresh commission to his Apostles, which they should act upon after his ascension ; that after that event, the twelve Apostles were the leading persons in the Christian Church, having under them two orders or degrees, viz. bishops (sometimes called elders) and deacons ; and that this threefold division of ministers in the Church lasted as far as the New Testament history reaches, the Apostles having set men over different Churches with apostolical authority, to preside during their absence, and to succeed them after their decease. This sufficiently appears from passages in St Paul's Epistles to Timothy and Titus. It farther appears, that to those immediate successors of the Apostles, who were of rank and authority above the bishops for a time, was given the title of ' Angel,' (see the prophecy in *Revelations* to the Seven Churches) ; and at a subsequent date, you find still the three

degrees of Church authority, the highest title being called bishop, the next priest, and lastly, the deacon. But I will give my farther reasoning on this point," continued the Warden, laying his hand upon the open folio volume beside him, "in the words of that bright ornament of the English Church, the holy Bishop of Down and Dromer: 'All obedience to man is for God's sake; for God, imprinting his authority upon the sons of men, like the sun reflecting upon a cloud, produces a parhelion, or a representation of his own glory, though in great distances and imperfection. It is the divine authority, though chartered upon a piece of clay, and imprinted upon a weak and imperfect man; and therefore, obedience to our superiors must be universal.—This precept is expressly apostolical. 'Be subject to every constitution and authority of man for the Lord's sake.' It is for God's sake, and therefore to every one, whether it be to the king, as superior, or to his ministers in subordination, that is, civil government. For Ecclesiasticus thus: 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account.' Now, Miss Graham, if you can give any hidden and opposed meaning to these seemingly plain injunctions to 'obey,' to 'submit yourself,' to be 'subject to' your superiors as appointed by God, I am ready to hear your exposition; but I should hope that you begin to perceive that the Bible is explicit on the subject of both State and Church authority."

"But, Dr Sinclair, there is, both in Church and State, so much of man's invention, so much that is anti-scriptural, that I should often feel that, in 'submitting,' and 'obeying,' and being 'subject to,' them, I should, instead of honouring, offend, God. Now, where I can respect the authority over me, I am willing enough to submit, and can bow to the individual character of the man, but never to his office."

"Wrong, Miss Graham, wrong. Listen to farther arguments from the same revered source."

"You mean from the partial and biassed pen of your old bishop," returned Katherine. "Now, my dear Sir, I am sorry to hurt your feelings; but I do not care the least for any bishop. I have just told you, that no official station whatever can inspire me with the slightest respect. I bow to character alone."

"Then here you may bow fearlessly," said the Warden with perfect command of temper; "the sternest nonconformist, the

most narrow-minded sectarian, the most bigotted Romanist, must each and all pay tribute to the expansive mind, deep learning, fervent piety, and loving affections of the holy Jeremy Taylor. You may listen also to the following quotations with the less fear, that they are little more than a running commentary on Scripture :—‘ There is no power but of God,’ so that no infirmity of person, no undervaluing circumstances, no exterior accident, is an excuse for disobedience, and to obey the divine authority passing through the dictates of a wise, excellent, and prudent governor, but to neglect the impositions of a looser head, is to worship Christ only upon Mount Thabor, and in the glories of his transfiguration, and to despise him upon Mount Calvary, and in the clouds of his inglorious and humble passion.

Not only to the good and gentle,’ says St Peter, ‘ but to the harsh and rigid.’ Miss Graham, I do not wish to comment in any severe manner on your mistaken warmth against the Church, but to convince you by gentle reasoning. Here, again, is a striking passage :—‘ For God did with greater severity punish the rebellion of Korah and his company, than the express murmurs against himself, nay, than the high crime of idolatry. For this latter crime God visited them with the sword ; but for disobedience and meeting against their superiors, God made the earth to swallow some of them, and fire from heaven to consume the rest, to show that rebellion is to be punished by the conspiracy of heaven and earth. And it is not amiss to observe, that obedience to man, being, as it is, for God’s sake, and yet to a person clothed with the circumstances and the same infirmities with ourselves, is a greater instance of humility than to obey God immediately, whose authority is divine, whose presence is terrible, whose power is infinite ; just as it is both greater faith and charity to relieve a poor saint for Jesus’ sake, than to give anything to Christ himself, if he should appear in all the robes of glory and immediate address.’ Miss Graham, I have perhaps spoken and quoted enough on the subject of authority. I do not wish to weaken the effect by prolixity ; and discordant as the sound of ‘ authority’ may be to the ear of a lively and independent woman, her respect for the word of God must be too great not to oblige her at least to ponder on this command of obedience,—a harsh yoke to the proud, but light and easy to the humble of heart.”

Katherine paused a little before she replied :—“ Dr Sinclair

I am aware that Scripture commands those who are taught, to respect their teachers, that is, if they can ; but, supposing that I were to concede still farther, that respect is due to all those, who, whether respectable or not, are placed in official authority, what contradictory obedience would there not be demanded of me, from the heads or pastors of each separate Church? Can I obey them all! Impossible! Yet all claim 'obedience,' 'submission,' 'subjection,' as being delegated by God. Of course, you advise me to obey the Church of England; and claim for her a precedence, a superiority over her sister Protestant communities, which perfectly shocks me! And then to urge on me the plea of one Church upon earth,—not spiritual but visible—and that one the Church of England! No! you must excuse me, Warden, I could not screw up my views of Christ's universal kingdom, within the British Channel south of the Tweed! Other Protestant communities have an equal right to this exclusiveness and self-adulation, but they are more humble, more charitable, more scriptural. The conduct of the Established Church of England towards the nonconformists and puritans, in earlier days, and her less cruel, but equally insulting, conduct at present towards the 'Dissenters,' deserve alone the condemnation which Sir James Mackintosh, in his History of England, passes on all the Protestant Churches:—'They acted as if they were infallible, though they waged war against that proud word.' In fact, I find the Church of England constantly punishing in others the disobedience of which she herself had set the first example."

"To whom, and in what, was she disobedient?" said the Warden.

"Why, my dear Sir, if to emancipate herself from the old corrupt Church of Rome were *not* disobedience and revolt (and far be it from me to think it so), what right has she to bring the charge on those who emancipated themselves from her, when their conscientious feeling has been, as hers was, a desire for more simplicity, more purity, more close adherence to the Apostolic model?"

"I will tell you why, young lady—because the Church of England did not *leave* the ancient Church, she merely pruned its excrescences. This was nobly contended for by the Martyr Ridley; it was equally advanced by Land, in the preface to his conference with Fisher. 'There is no greater absurdity stirring

this day in Christendom,' says he, 'than that the Reformation of an old corrupted Church should be taken, will we nill we, for the building of a new.' This essential point is also maintained by our deep theologian Tillotson, who says,—'When the additions which the Church of Rome has made to the ancient faith, and their innovations in practice, are pared off, that which remains of their religion is ours.' But the 'reformers' from the Church of England, as those of Scotland, and of the Continent, were not content with pruning and paring; they uprooted, devastated, demolished: and the result of their impetuous and extravagant career is this, that there is scarcely one prominent corruption of the Romish times, which may not be contrasted by its opposite error amongst the English Dissenters, and the Scottish and Continental Reformers."

"Doctor of Divinity and Warden of—— College, Oxford," replied Katherine, "you are necessitated to say all this, and I honour you for your zealous '*esprit de corps*;'—but, thank heaven, *I* have taken no vows to defend the half measures of your very conceited Church!

"The middle course of truth is never admired by the rash and intemperate," replied the Warden with dignity. "The Church of England can support, without danger the defalcation of Miss Katherine Graham; but will *she* willingly renounce the privilege of membership with a Church, which can lay claim to the transmission of apostolic gifts, to a priesthood uninterrupted from the first ordination by Christ, our head?"

"But, Dr Sinclair, you must of necessity trace this priesthood through the corrupt Church of Rome; for my favourite friends, the Albigenses and Waldenses, in their woods and caverns, do not attempt to claim this, to me, unimportant line of priesthood;—and this necessity of making use of the Church you protest against, this attempt to carry purity safely through corruption, this trimming and temporizing conduct, is the reason why I cannot respect the Church of England."

"Will you respect the words of Christ our Lord, young woman? will your levity be awed by the promises of your God to a priesthood you would fain despise?"—and, as Katherine remained silent, being for the moment really awed by the cold stern manner with which Dr Sinclair pronounced those last words, he drew the large Bible to him, and began to comment on the twenty-eighth chapter of St Matthew from the eighteenth

verse :—“ ‘ All power is given to me in Heaven and in earth. Go, **THEREFORE**, (observe the force of this word ‘ therefore,’ as it expressly implies the delegated power),—go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ;’ or, in other words, ‘ as my Father sent me, so send I you.’ To all which St John farther adds,—‘ That, having thus spoken, He breathed on them.’ You here perceive that the blessed God Man used the matter and form of an express and awful gift.”

“ I expected here,” interrupted Geraldine, “ that you would have said ‘ Sacrament.’ It seems to me, from the definition of a sacrament given in our Church Catechism, ‘ an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace ordained by Christ himself,’ that from this first institution by Christ of superior gifts and grace, in favour of the Apostles, and their successors, Ordination has every claim to be received as a Sacrament. And when I think of the awful service which we have so lately read, I cannot understand why the Church of England has retained two Sacraments only,—‘ Baptism’ and the ‘ Supper of the Lord.’ ”

“ If you will recall more of the words of your catechism, my dear, you will find, that to the question, ‘ How many Sacraments hath Christ ordained in his Church ?’ the answer is, ‘ Two only as *generally* necessary to salvation ;’ and while the Church of England holds that each sex, and every age, is bound, under awful responsibility, to receive ‘ Baptism’ and ‘ the Supper of the Lord,’ it can never be required of women, of infants, or of all classes of men, to receive this, and other institutions, called, by the Roman Catholics, ‘ Sacraments.’ ”

“ No ! certainly,” replied Geraldine ; “ it is not necessary to salvation to receive ‘ ordination,’ or ‘ marriage,’ and I perceive that the Church of England does not positively refuse the title of Sacrament to the other institutions of our Lord. She merely speaks of those two, which all are bound to receive, and without which (*having the means and rejecting them*) we cannot be saved.”

“ For myself,” continued the Warden, “ I have ever considered Ordination as so solemn a compact between Christ and the shepherds of his flock, that I receive it as possessing the essential parts of a Sacrament. And now tell me, Miss Graham,

what think you of the intention of our Lord when he said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost'? Did he lead the Apostles to suppose, that he conveyed to them a real donation, and yet bestowed nothing?"

"I should never suppose any thing so blasphemous," replied she.

"Or," continued the Warden, "that Christ really did bestow what he promised, but that the Apostles failed to receive it?"

"No! no!" cried Katherine, "why imagine me obliged to believe either of these absurdities? I fully believe in the miraculous gifts of Christ, and I fully believe in the reception of them by the Apostles; for every proof is given, in the inspired pages, that these were not ordinary men. But what has this miraculously-gifted body to do with the besotted and degraded race of so-called priests, who succeeded them? Where are the proofs of these having received the Holy Ghost? Where are their gifts of healing, and their intuitive knowledge of languages, and all the miraculous power of the Spirit, which came on the Apostles?"

"The priesthood," replied Dr Sinclair, "does not claim more than the gifts conveyed in 'Ordination,' which you are confounding with those bestowed on the day of Pentecost. The former transmits, in its holy and ghostly effects, authority over the souls of men, and power to remit and retain sins. After the words, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost,' follows immediately, 'Whose sins soever ye retain they are retained, and whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted;' and then, 'Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world;' plainly extending far beyond the days of the Apostles the gifts conveyed by ordination. But when the intimation is given, *Luke xxiv. 49*, of the descent of the Holy Ghost, in cloven tongues of fire, no promise of a transmission of these gifts is given; and, beyond the favoured ones, who 'were all assembled with one accord in one place,' the Pentecostal gifts extended not. And now, Miss Graham, in reply to your attack on the Church of England, that she has, in retaining a priesthood which, can only be traced through the Romish Church, attempted to carry purity safely through corruption, and that her conduct has been too temporizing to command your respect,—let me say this, that you are again confounding the actual belief of the Church with the outward demonstration of that belief; or, in other words, practice. The Church her-

self is to be judged of by her accredited and acknowledged dogmas of faith. The Church of England is corrupt in practice, and has been as much so, perhaps, as the Church of Rome ; but, if you examine her articles, you will find her sound in principle. The Church of Rome was corrupt in practice long before she was corrupt in principle ; and although it would be difficult to defend some of the dogmas of preceding councils, she was not, perhaps, really schismatic till the council of Trent. This is the date when those errors in practice, which had crept in, and, by degrees, had been vaguely admitted, received the fatal stamp of Church authority ; and by this act of self-destruction,—listen to this, Geraldine!—the Romish Church cut herself off from the pure and Scriptural Church, and from that time became as a dead branch : while that part of the priesthood and laity who steadfastly adhered to the Apostolic model, remained, as they had ever been, the Holy Church,—the spouse of Christ. What becomes now of your assertion, that this Church, which is the Church of our favoured land, existed only through corruption ?”

“ Perhaps, Dr Sinclair,” at length replied Katherine, “ I had better not run the risk of displeasing you, which I certainly must, if I give utterance to all I think.”

“ If you can divest yourself, Miss Graham, of your accustomed tone of irreverence, which is the fault of your Presbyterian association, you may then place your objections to the Church fully before me ; for it is your tone of mind, not the nature of your opinions, which is to me chiefly reprehensible.”

“ You think, Warden, that I am of too independent and fearless a turn of mind ? Well ! perhaps that is my tendency ; but I assure you that I am now struggling for no selfish or private rights, but for those of Protestantism, as a great whole. If I must renounce either this transmitted priesthood, this Apostolic descent, or else the Protestant Churches of Scotland, Geneva, Germany, and the respectable Dissenters of England, let me rather doubt the necessity of any distinct line of priests ; let me suppose that every faithful expounder of God’s word is priest sufficient to lead others to righteousness, and to be himself accepted of the Lord.”

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a servant, announcing one who was hailed with pleasure by all the party, notwithstanding the engrossing nature of the conversation :

this was the former college friend of Dr Sinclair, the learned and eccentric Mr Everard.

"Well! my dear friends, contagion or non-contagion, here am I," exclaimed the old gentleman, entering with the spring and vivacity of youth. "Why, how is this? Warden of —, have you been laying all your college honours at the feet of Miss Graham, or have the ladies been referring to you as umpire in the Paradise of Coquettes? Red cheeks! sparkling eyes! wrinkled brow!—Come! come! in plain terms, what is the matter?"

"Controversy!" said Geraldine.

"The devil!" cried Mr Everard, shutting his eyes tight, and putting a hand to each ear; "give wrangling to the winds. I'll none of it! Come, and ride with me on the open heath, for I have something to show, and something to tell, under the bright sun, that shines alike on the Jew and Gentile. Ah! my little sparkler, so you are smiling on me," continued he, while peeping from his still half-closed eyes at Geraldine, who, to welcome her old friend and favourite, had pushed aside her drawing-table, where she had listened too intently to the conversation to make much progress in her employment, and who now declared her readiness to follow his advice. The horses were accordingly ordered to the gate, leading from the flower garden into the park, that the party might not pass through the infected body of the house. "Katherine," said Geraldine, as the servant waited for farther orders, "I believe you find the new horse too dull for you, and my uncle generally rides the favourite grey."

"What! more difficulties between Miss Graham and the Warden!" cried Mr Everard.

"None whatever," said the Warden, rising and bowing to Miss Graham. "I shall be happy to prove to my fair opponent the difference of concession in material and immaterial points, and the pleasure it will give me to resign to her the horse she so gracefully controls."

"Thank you, Warden, both for the pretty horse, and the pretty speech; but what will you ride yourself?"

"The groom desired me to say, yesterday," said the footman, "that the General's black Valencia would be the better now for exercise."

"Well, then, I will try the charger," said the Warden.

"Like the doughty churchmen of old" observed Mr Everard.

"who, whether in battle, or following the chase, were ever nobly mounted."

"All which magnificence well became a priesthood transmitted from those who went forth with but scrip and staff," cried Katherine Graham, as she followed Geraldine, to equip for her ride; and, without waiting for the Warden's reply,—that "magnificence, however reprehensible in the clergy, had never been a dogma of their faith."

CHAPTER VI.

A dim and mighty minster of old time,
A temple shadowy, with remembrances
Of the majestic past!

Hemans.

"I AM rejoiced, Mr Everard, that your secret lies on this side of the heath," said Miss Carrington, as, after a long canter on the turf, they all but retraced their steps, and again approached the town and Manor Hall of Elverton. "I am rejoiced that you have made us turn our horses' heads this way; for, as I am sure you would not risk our entering the town, you are going to climb the Abbey Hill; and visit the ruins."

"Everard," cried the Warden, "if such be your intention, you must excuse my being your fellow-climber. Both Valencia and myself see the peril of attempting it, at our sober time of life. We will ruminate on the turf below; and, if your antiquarian research should exhaust our patience, we can slowly return home by the way we came."

"But is it really dangerous, Mr Everard?" said Geraldine, who loved difficulties on horseback much less than in argument. "I have little physical courage, and this new way up to the Abbey does, indeed, appear very steep."

"Not a bit,—not a bit! give your horse the free rein, till he reaches those furze bushes; then turn him sharp to the left. Now for it! who is for glory follow me!" and the energetic old man struck boldly up the steep ascent, followed closely by Katherine; and, after some hesitation, by Geraldine and the grooms. As in most things, the first difficulties were the only formidable ones; and, after reaching the little platform pointed out by Mr Everard, and stopping there for an instant to congratulate themselves, and pat the favourite horses, they followed him, as he directed, up a natural or long-disused path, the

gradual ascent of which allowed them to take hasty glances at the wide expanse of rich champaign country beneath them. "On! on!" was, however, the impatient cry of their leader; and they obeyed, till fairly under the Abbey walls. They were then allowed to rest, and to contemplate one of the most magnificent prospects ever spread before the eye of man.

"And this is your secret, Mr Everard," said Geraldine, half delighted, half disappointed; "this view does indeed exceed that from any other part of the ruins, and is quite magnificent. I can scarcely believe but that in the extreme horizon I can trace the sea."

"You do, you do!" cried Mr Everard, rubbing his hands in transport; "you see from hence the western coast: but observe what a succession of faintly defined distances,—what a rich middle ground,—the tinted heaths warming and relieving the greens; and then to reflect what figures once occupied the foreground, moving round the hallowed building, of which just a window-frame, or ivied buttress, would contrast with the smiling landscape. Now, Geraldine, my girl, you must draw all this for me, and place me some holy man, engaged in orisons, just within the Abbey; for now we will go within, and decide whether a crumbling breach, or fretted window-arch, shall frame the future picture."

They now entered, with their horses, into a little ruined court, whence no access to the rest of the building was discoverable, but where Mr Everard alighted, and lifted the ladies from their horses.

"I see that your one secret contains many," said Katherine Graham, as they in vain searched for a communication with the interior of the building. Mr Everard's eyes sparkled; but he did not attempt to aid them in their perplexity.

"Let us look more into these niches," said Geraldine, striking as firmly as she could on the stone pedestal; which, however, seemed part of the solid building, and gave forth no hollow sound. "I am delighted," continued she, "to find that the secret has a reference to this venerable and venerated pile; for greatly as I love the simple magnificence of nature, my enjoyment in it is not complete without some association of past or future times in the history of man."

"Well," cried the happy Mr Everard, "will you give up the search?" and, without waiting the reply, he beckoned the

servants to him, and, with their assistance, succeeded in turning on its concealed and well-constructed pivot, the pedestal of one of those very niches which Geraldine had fruitlessly attempted ; when, to the joy of the lovers of adventure and romance, steps were seen beneath, and a faint light, from some other egress, discovered the secret communication with the interior of the ruined Abbey.

"I am quite ready to follow you," cried Geraldine, as Mr Everard turned round for applause at this opening to a new adventure. "I shall dream of this for nights to come : this is really a secret ; but how did you discover it ?"

"Ah ! that I cannot reveal ; therefore you must suppose it chance, or the aid of the saints, who are bound to befriend the lovers of the olden time, for that was their golden age. No one cares for the saints now-a-days. I do not think there is a spice of poetic feeling left in England. I found my way up here one day ; because, having spied a bit of rare geranium growing just on the platform, and having urged my horse up to it, I then followed that obvious little path, which seems in fact to be no secret to the children of the town, who have, perhaps, formed it in their wanderings round the Abbey. This outer court was once, I am inclined to think, part of the covered building. But come down now with me to my hidden treasures ; we can still talk there." So saying, Mr Everard, bending his person considerably, stepped into the small aperture, and descended the stone steps, followed by his willing companions, whom he introduced into a small but exquisitely worked chapel,—the ornaments of which had not only escaped the ravages of time, and the still ruder assaults of reformation zeal, but exhibited a freshness and beauty which excited the astonishment, as much as the admiration, of the visitors. The light fell from apertures in the carved ceiling, and was sufficient to show the white marble altar, and bas-relief of the 'Lamb that was slain,' and the 'Sealed Book,' described in the Apocalypse. The workmanship of this drew from the usually severe critic, Mr Everard, unbounded praise, followed by regrets that the large picture above the altar, of which he had had a full view the other day, when the sun was at the meridian, should now be nearly obscured. "It is an undoubted Leonardo da Vinci," cried he, "and in admirable preservation. I would not have you miss seeing this Virgin and Child for any thing. Well ! can you climb ?" at length

added he, laying his hand on the altar, and planting his foot firmly on the most projecting part of the bas-relief. Geraldine shrank back. "What! my little amazon, afraid of climbing?" cried he; "here,—I will show you how easy it is:" and, with the spring of a boy, the old man raised himself on the altar, and held out his hand to his young favourite. "I cannot! I cannot!" exclaimed Geraldine, unable to define, even to herself, the emotion with which she beheld this desecration of the holy spot. "I know not why, but indeed, Mr Everard, as you have seen the picture before, I wish you would not remain there."

"Ah! you have a little superstitious feeling about an altar," replied he, as he trampled up and down, to catch the best light for the admired picture. "I believe you are right! These are feelings which bespeak a devotional, even if mistaken, frame of —! Ah! here's the point of sight. Now you may see the hand grasping the drapery: fine—very fine. Miss Graham, you must see this masterpiece,—decidedly an original,—so come up, that is it: now take care, for the space is not large;" and thus, having assisted Katherine to mount, he continued to expatiate on the depth of colouring, and breadth of lights and shadows,—proving to his companion, who cared little for the dissertation, that this *chef-d'œuvre* could have come from no hand but that of Da Vinci: while Geraldine stood below, looking around the dimly-lighted chapel, and lost in wonder at the state of preservation in which every thing appeared, as contrasted with the pile of ruins of which it formed an integral part. After some minutes thus spent, she again approached the altar, and, gazing with fresh admiration at the inimitable carving of the bas-relief, entreated her two friends, now about to descend, not to plant their feet on that which was a type of the Redeemer, but to regain the pavement by the sides of the altar; where, on moving, she had just discovered an opening, containing shelves, doubtless for the safe keeping of the books and sacred vessels of the Catholic service. By these they might descend; and to oblige Geraldine, as well as for their better convenience, both Mr Everard and Miss Graham made use of these shelves, and then proceeded to the second grand secret; namely, the communication between this little hidden chapel and the renowned and frequented Abbey. But Geraldine lingered at the side where she had seen these shelves; and at length, from the remote corner of one of them, she drew forth, amidst dust and rubbish-

a grove, a cluster of registers, tipped with dingy gold, and an old Missal, in Latin and English. Geraldine's exclamation, as this last treasure appeared, drew her companions quickly back to her side; and it required all Mr Everard's magnanimity and benevolence to pardon Geraldine's younger eyes for having discovered these relics. He struggled, however, to forgive her, and gaily said,—“When next I grope amongst old ruins, and renovated chapels, I shall stipulate, before I bring any fellow-lovers of antiquity to see my hobby, that no one rides but myself.”

Geraldine's quick perception instantly felt his chagrin; and she replied,—“Every thing in this chapel is yours, as actual discoverer. I merely petition that, at some future time, I may read and study this Roman Catholic Liturgy. I have long wished to see a Missal, but knew not whom to ask, without its being immediately reported that ‘Miss Carrington had turned Papist!’”

“If all reports were as prophetic,” observed Miss Graham, “the public would be in little danger of being misled.”

“Oh! Katherine,” exclaimed Geraldine, “it is you who are turning false prophetess: for there is far less danger of this result in my search after truth, than there was some days ago; and docile as I intend to be to my uncle's instructions, how can you foresee such a termination to them?”

“Because, my dear,” replied Miss Graham, “you are listening, hour after hour, to arguments and reasoning from that High Church uncle of yours,—all which sink deep into your mind, while they reach no farther than my temper. By his ‘decent forms,’ his transmitted priesthood, his Apostolic gifts, with his clinging to his spiritual ancestry, and his anathemas against dissent from the Church, he is paving the way for your easy and obvious walk into that very Church which he actually boasts never to have *left*, but only to have reformed.”

“Ha! lies the wind in that quarter?” said Mr Everard, as he buttoned the Missal within the breast of his coat, and fixed his eyes with great interest on the speakers.

“I must hear all my uncle's arguments to the close,” replied Geraldine, “before I can pronounce on them. At present he has intentionally touched, but slightly, on the separation between the Roman Catholic Church and that of England. He is proceeding methodically, first, to defend the arguments of a visible

and hierarchical Church upon earth, for the guardianship of the Holy Scriptures, and for the instruction of the faithful. Very possibly his train of argument may bear closely on the Catholic doctrine in this respect; but that some points of union are to annul all the points of disagreement, I cannot hope."

"Hope!" cried Mr Everard, with fresh interest.

"Yes," said Geraldine, "I often wish that some timely concession, on the Catholic side, could have prevented the breach between the Churches, which every century seems to widen. But Katherine is quite mistaken in supposing that my uncle is helping me, unknown to himself, into the Catholic Church; for it is he alone who has arrested me. Disgusted with Protestantism, as it has been displayed to me, in all the lawlessness of private interpretation, and in the severity with which every new expounder condemned his brother's vagaries, and dogmatized on his own, I had almost made up my mind to go for instruction to this Catholic priest, Father Bernard, when my uncle arrived, and Providence favoured my confidence in him. I am earnestly wishing to be satisfied with our Church; and there is, in my uncle, a calm persuasion of being in the right, which has its effect upon me."

"Well!" cried Katherine, "I conclude that the Warden has nothing more to say to me; for, after winding up to that grand climax in favour of his Church, he can only now (to use his own Johnsonian terms) 'weaken by prolixity,' and I resign him wholly to you. Why, Mr Everard, you have fallen into a complete reverie, in consequence of this interlude of ours! Let us now proceed with the wonders of this Popish fabric."

"With all my heart," cried he, "rousing himself from his fit of abstraction. "Now for the secret communication with the abbey!" and he led his young friends to the other side of the altar, from that on which they had stood and discoursed. Here were no shelves, but on opening the door, which formed the end of the altar, a wide space was discoverable: there being no back either to the altar or to the picture. They entered, by stooping, into the obscure recess, and then, closely following Mr Everard, ascended a small spiral staircase, which led them far above the height of the little chapel, and proved very fatiguing to the fair adventurers, encumbered as they were by their long riding habits; the more so that they were nearly in the dark, the small loop-holes which had once served to admit the

light being choked by ivy and rubbish. At length they were cheered by a stronger light, and each separately emerged, after many warnings of caution from Mr Everard, upon the dismantled but still majestic wall of the abbey ruin.

"I am convinced," said Mr Everard, "that a passage or corridor once ran along here, in the thickness of the wall, and thus formed a communication with the interior of the abbey; though I do not wish to risk your safety, or my own, by venturing farther, especially as the wind is somewhat troublesome up here. Mark well, however, that this opening, at the top of the little spiral staircase, is apparently the only one since we left the altar in the chapel below, and now, as you descend, keep one hand sliding along the wall, and call out to me if you feel any inequality in the surface; for there is a sliding door, which I may miss, having forgotten to count the steps down to it the other day, and passed it.—It is just at thirty feet from the chapel."

"This is admirable for our white riding gloves," cried Katherine to Geraldine, as they felt the outer wall in descending the damp and mouldy tower.

"Take them off and give them to me," said Mr Everard eagerly, "I will put them in my pocket, and your touch will be more accurate without them."

"Thank you," returned Miss Graham, much amused by his simplicity: "but I prefer on every occasion spoiling art to spoiling nature, and have much more respect for my hands than for my gloves.—Here is something different from the rest of the wall, however," continued she, suddenly stopping in her descent.

"Go down then a few steps, both of you ladies, till I can feel it; for I cannot pass you in this narrow place. Ha! ha! we have it. Now, take care I do not strike you in pushing aside this door, which slides into the wall. I have counted this time—there are just twenty-two steps from the top; so that the tower contains just forty-two steps in all. Well done, old Everard!" cried he at length, as the reluctant panel moved in its destined groove, and left a narrow opening into a gallery, actually formed within the wall, and perfectly light from being roofless, while the footing was secure on the hewn stone. Into this they stepped, and after walking along between the two high walls, which were still of a respectable thickness, they descended about fifteen steps, and found themselves at an opening, whence (thanks to a large pile of stones and rubbish) they could easil

gain the large quadrangle of the ruin ; a place well known to our party, as well as to the rest of the neighbourhood, as one of the most perfect specimens of ancient ecclesiastical architecture to be seen in that part of England ; and, in these modern times, exposed to all the pic-nic incursions of pleasure-loving parties ; who, however, little suspected the fact, that, in times forming a middle age between the monastic era of the abbey and its present desecration, the ancient vault beneath the abbey church had, by the persecuted Catholics of the reigns of the Tudors and their successors, been converted into a chapel, where, at midnight, and by stealth, the ancient but prohibited service was performed, —the priest ministering at the risk of life, the hearers attending at that of heavy fines, if not of imprisonment and torture. “ Yes,” continued Mr Everard, who gave his two auditors this account, “ I have been, during the past month, incessantly at this spot, and am convinced of what I tell you. The common county chronicle gives the account of the sequestration of the abbey and the abbey lands, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, together with the pillage attendant on all his royal reforms. The building, however, was not destroyed, and, during the revival of Catholicity in the reign of Mary, was used as an hospital, with some attempts to restore its former privileges, which were all swept away by Elizabeth. The hospital even became suspicious, because, within cloistered walls, the establishment was merged in other institutions ; and, at the supposed discovery of some ‘ popish plot,’ the popular fury satiated itself by demolishing the whole interior of this majestic pile. Here ends the county record, and henceforth the principal interest lies in the vault beneath the chancel of the ancient abbey church, to which the access was probably from behind the high altar. Be that as it may. I have ascertained that the little sliding door, which we had such difficulty in finding, was constructed by the more modern and persecuted Catholics, as a farther means of escape, should they be pursued up the staircase from their subterranean chapel.”

“ And why, do you think, has this little memorable spot been deserted ?” said Geraldine.

“ I conclude,” replied Mr Everard, “ that unconquerable difficulties at length attended the access to it, for on the possessor of the little farm below the hill would depend the freedom of the path we mounted ; and now that the Established Church, thank God, has ceased to persecute the builders and benefactors

of the cathedrals and churches of the land, and allows them to erect, as they can, their humble chapels, the Catholics will no longer be driven into roofs and under ground to celebrate the mysteries of their faith."

"Mr Everard, you speak as though you believed in those mysteries."

"No! I do not, but my blood boils when I see persecution, either when its victims cannot believe, or when they *cannot help believing*, what passes man's comprehension.

"Who sees these dismal heaps, but will demand
What barbarous invader sacked the land!
But when he hears no Goth, no Turk did bring
This desolation, but a Christian king,
When nothing but the *name of zeal* appears
'Twixt our best actions, and the worst of theirs.
What does he think our *sacrilege* would spare,
Since these th' effects of our *devotion* are!"

"That voice, and those sentiments, must belong to the liberal Mr Everard," exclaimed some one, who had overheard the latter part at least of this quotation; and, as the party turned to identify the speaker, two gentlemen issued from behind an abutment, which had hitherto concealed them, the younger and taller of whom, advancing eagerly to Mr Everard, shook him heartily by the hand; when, turning to bow to the two ladies, "Miss Carrington?" exclaimed he, in joyful surprise, "have I indeed the pleasure of renewing our acquaintance in the company of so great a peace-maker as my friend Mr Everard?"

"Why, my dear," said the old gentleman to Geraldine, "do you already know Sir Eustace de Grey?"

"Indeed I do," replied Geraldine smiling; "but I see that Sir Eustace, by referring to a peace-maker, has not quite forgiven my attacks last year upon himself and his Church."

"I could only be honoured by the privilege of defending *myself*," replied he, gaily; "and as for my Church, I am less sore than I formerly was on her account, as I see the odious mask now falling off, which misrepresentation had fastened on her matchless beauty."

"Geraldine," said Miss Graham, "it is very damp here, and I am tired to death of all these discoveries. Pray, are we to stay in the ruins all day?"

"Are you really tired, Katherine? I beg your pardon, we will return home directly," replied Geraldine, who felt, by the

tone of her friend's voice, that she was vexed as well as fatigued ; and Mr Everard was now commissioned to call the servants, who had been ordered to bring round the horses to the great entrance of the abbey. As Sir Eustace held the rein of the spirited Finella, his hitherto silent companion advanced to ask him, whether another day would be more convenient for taking the measurements they had contemplated in the abbey ?"

"It would, indeed, my good Sir," replied the young baronet ; "at least, if you can go on without me so much the better—if not, write to me—or no—stay—I will call on you to-morrow."

"Surely I ought to know that countenance," said Geraldine, as the stranger bowed his farewell, and returned to the interior of the abbey ; "perhaps I have seen him at church."

"I can scarcely think so," replied Sir Eustace, smiling, "for Mr Grantly is a staunch Catholic, and devoted also, in his profession of architect, to our poor little chapels ; to attend to which he has often declined more lucrative engagements."

"What can be his purpose in taking the measurements of the ruin?" asked Geraldine ; but she wished to recall the question when uttered, as her companion mounted his horse without a reply, and the little troop now slowly descended the sloping turf, until they regained the high road.

CHAPTER VII.

"Experience is the father, and memory is the mother, of wisdom."

Spanish Proverb.

"No ! Katherine, you are quite mistaken," said Geraldine, in the evening of that day, as the two friends reposed after their fatigues on the same sofa, while the Warden and Mr Everard remained in the dining-room engaged in deep discourse. "In supposing Sir Eustace de Grey to influence my leaning towards the Catholic belief, you are mistaken, and wilfully so, for have I ever concealed from you any feeling of my heart ? and have you not watched the progress of reason and religion in conquering the preference I own to have felt, in more girlish days, for *that* Catholic from whom country and creed have parted me for ever ? have you not often heard me since return to heaven my thanks, that strength was given to me to steel my heart against the brilliant witcheries of Spain ; that all was over that could tempt my heart, could cloud my mind, could cast a shadow on

my high resolve to know the truth ! . . . Four years ago, some conscientious scruples would have fettered me—now I am free, and, being so, trust me I will preserve my liberty."

"I know too well your scrupulous integrity," returned Miss Graham, "to suppose that your mind will be swayed, except in self-delusion: you will continue to believe yourself at liberty, and this very belief, added to the sacrifice you must make, in selecting an impoverished Catholic for the sharer of your many thousands, is exactly what would most gain on the confiding generosity of your character. I am the more annoyed by the renewal of this acquaintance, inasmuch as I had hoped that your early prepossession for a foreign Catholic had gradually been merged in a firm and warm regard for a Protestant countryman, one whom even *I* think worthy of you, one to whom your father gives his esteem, and whose religious principles have stood the test of trial and experience. Think of General Carrington's disappointment, should he find that another romance has made you refuse the son of his old friend."

"I hope never to refuse Lord Hervey," replied Geraldine.

"Do you?" said Katherine; "I rejoice to hear this!"

"I mean," continued Geraldine, "that I hope to prevent his Lordship's ever proposing. I did so once before, for his pride and delicacy were admirably clear-sighted, and stood my friends: may they ever prove so to me! But, Katherine, let me venture to say, that I in my turn, must think you self-deceived in your judgment on your poor friend. Lord Hervey is a Protestant, and, therefore, you do not accuse me of being won by his coronet, a calumny of which half the world would suspect me. You have never supposed me capable of sacrificing my earthly happiness to vanity and ambition; then, oh! why suspect me of renouncing my eternal happiness to the girlish whim of a romantically sounding name?"

"No, no!" replied Katherine, "I do not think it is the mere name of Eustace de Grey, which has charms for you; but the whole romance of his position. The once immense estates of the De Greys, confiscated under the ungrateful Charles, and parcelled out, here a little, there a little, among Protestant courtiers; the honourable pride which prevents his ever advert-
ing to his contrasted fortunes, with all those traits of generosity and pious enthusiasm with which Mr Everard has been entertain-
ing you ever since we parted with Sir Eustace at the park gate

—not to mention that indescribable nobility and grace of manner in which I confess him to be matchless amongst your suitors All this, Geraldine, unconsciously to yourself, biasses your mind towards the community, of which you see so good a specimen.”

“Suppose I were to own to you,” replied Geraldine, “that notwithstanding my appreciation of those rare qualities to which you pay generous tribute, Sir Eustace is too lively, too animated, too much like myself in fact, exactly to please my imagination. I like my contrasts. The pensive, the meditative, the all but sad, are those who fasten on my fancy; and, although my life has been one of nearly unclouded prosperity, yet I seem to have a prospective sympathy with the unhappy. The joyous Eustace de Grey requires no sympathy of this nature, his heart seems ever bounding and elastic.”

“You have only to see him fairly in love,” said Katherine, “and your fancy for the pathetic and the miserable would be gratified.”

“I find, then,” returned Geraldine, “that I *must* satisfy your mind respecting the degree of regard I am likely to feel for this new friend. You force me to prove to you the limit beyond which it were impossible for that regard to extend. Know, then, that Sir Eustace is attached and betrothed to his cousin, the beautiful Countess Angela de Grey—a being, compared with whom, Geraldine Carrington is as nought.”

“And why have you tormented me so long by concealing this good news?” said Katherine, smiling in evident satisfaction.

“Because I was told of this engagement by their aunt, Lady Winefride Blount, in strict confidence, and you must not make me repent having admitted you amongst the few who are intrusted with the secret,—the reason for this secrecy being some still deeper secret, into which I am not admitted.”

At this instant Mr Everard and the Warden entered the room. Geraldine, springing from the sofa, rang the bell for coffee, and then, meeting her two valued friends with her usual playful and affectionate greeting, was instantly struck by the gravity of their countenances, and asked whether anything painful had occurred.

The Warden laid his hand on his niece's head in a kind and paternal manner, but did not reply; and taking up the evening newspaper, drew near the window, with the air of one who

wishes to mark his desire to be alone. Mr Everard, however, replied to Geraldine's inquiring looks by a smile, and, perceiving a shawl hanging near, he threw it around her, and drew her arm within his as he led her into the balcony. "Tell me," whispered Geraldine, "what has disturbed my uncle? Does the dreadful cholera extend its ravages? Is any one else attacked amongst our people?"

"No: the official report continues much the same; and Sinclair is more at ease on your account, as he perceives your courage to be rallied, and has, besides, much comfort from this sudden change of wind, which blows from the Hall to the town, instead of bringing us the infected vapours thence."

"Then why, Mr Everard, did he look so solemnly in my face just now?"

"Because my sweet little friend has smiled once more on the ('Papist' De Grey."

"Oh! is that all?" cried Geraldine; "I am much relieved, and shall soon relieve my uncle's mind on that subject. I have no personal interest whatever in my inquiries respecting the authority of my own Church to decide against those doctrines of the Catholic Church, which she has taught me to consider anti-scriptural; and I shall be happy to give an account to my uncle of my former acquaintance with Sir Eustace, which has never been renewed till our accidental meeting this morning."

"And pray, then, let me be present," said Mr Everard; "for my interest will be fully as great as his, though my anxiety will not be so painful. Tell me first, however, my dear,—if I may presume on your kind partiality for your old friend,—tell me something of the progress of your mind from that ultra-protestantism into which you were conducted by your governess, Miss Cooper, of zealous memory, and which bade fair to turn my gentle, loving, and merry little favourite, into a pedantic and censorious regulator of every one's soul but her own."

"I have promised my uncle the very account you have requested," said Geraldine, "so that here are two separate histories for me to enter upon, whenever you and my dear uncle are inclined to listen to what would be great egotism, were it not for the stake it involved. But, Mr Everard, have you any objection to my questioning you on your opinion of the Roman Catholic Church? I know you to be a member of my own Church, from your always attending the same service with us, and accepting

the office of godfather to my uncle Edmund's little boy; but from several things, especially from your conversation this morning with your friend, Sir Eustace, I should have guessed you to be a Catholic."

"Just because I do not believe all the 'raw head and bloody bone' stories which have accumulated during three hundred years against the Catholics," replied Mr Everard.

"It was not your freedom from vulgar prejudices, my dear Sir," said Geraldine, "which made me listen with surprise to part of your observations to Sir Eustace; for I too have been enlightened, by a little work of Gothe's, respecting the actual belief of our ancestors; which belief, though it comprises more than I could bring my mind to receive, is, nevertheless, very different from that which Protestants attribute to them."

"Ah, yes! the Catholics are never allowed to know their own creed; we Protestants always supposing ourselves better acquainted with it, doubtless by some supernatural intervention, as we never read or listen to what they have to say for themselves. But what struck you as strange, in my conversation this morning?"

"One thing," replied Geraldine, "—~~was~~, that, in speaking of the Reformation, you called it 'the revolt' against the Church."

"Well! and what was it?" said Mr Everard. "Do you not know, that when a revolt is successful, it always bears some other name?" } }

"But my uncle will not admit that *our* Church ever could revolt; for he holds that she is the same with the Apostolical Church of the early ages, and, at the time of the Reformation, was purified, but not destroyed."

"But he speaks, does he not, of the pure Church of England *emancipating* herself from the thralldom of Rome?"

"Indeed he does, and in those very terms."

"Well, 'emancipation,' and 'reformation,' convey to my mind different images: but, be that as it may, if the spiritual supremacy of Rome was an usurpation, then use which word you please: but if not, then the great event of the sixteenth century was a revolt:—and now let us have our coffee!"

"I am rather amused," whispered Geraldine to Mr Everard, as they re-entered her boudoir from the balcony, "at the care with which my uncle and Miss Graham would guard me from any acquaintance with Catholics, when you are not considered

dangerous—you, whose arguments and opinions would have infinitely more weight with me, from the mere circumstance of your freedom from the trammels of party. But I cannot understand your position, Mr Everard. You are ostensibly a member of the Church of England, and yet you term her Reformation a 'revolt' against the spiritual supremacy of Rome: are you then of no outward Church? Are you independent of any authority? You puzzle me, Mr Everard."

The old gentleman sipped his coffee for some time in silence; at length he whispered, "I have a great scheme in view—but hush!—the time is not yet ripe, though we live in glorious days Warden—what news?"

"None whatever," said Dr Sinclair, laying down the paper.

"Then I vote," continued Mr Everard, "that we get rid of these empty cups, and of the servants, and that we become more enlightened respecting the previous state of mind of our little favourite here, before *you* can know how far to lead her in learned research, or *I*—into my Utopia."

The Warden smiled, and shook his head, at this reference to what he considered as the offspring of the one crazy cell in his friend's brain; and, in a short time, Geraldine was seated between her two venerable friends. Katherine Graham, being absorbed in letter-writing, was not considered of the party, and Mr Everard paved the way for Geraldine's recital, by relating some anecdotes of her childish devotion of feeling, and of the change which he had remarked, in this respect, under the governess who had taken the principal part in her education, Madame Croisart.—"Pray, my dear, was she a Catholic, under promise never to speak on the subject of religion, or a Protestant, whose doctrinal sins were those of omission?"

"Can you ask that question," replied Geraldine, "when my father even exceeds my uncle in his hostility to Catholics? No! Madame Croisart was a French Protestant, although she conformed in everything to the Church of England. Possibly, from having belonged to a persecuted race in a Popish land, she was terrified by anything that appeared to border upon Catholicism, and checked all my bursts of enthusiasm, by dilating on the folly and danger of '*une tête montée*;' speaking of religious emotion with contempt, and of imagination as though it were a crime! Now, as I am quite aware that true religion can exist in minds and hearts the most prosaic, I do not blame Madame Croisart

for exhibiting religion, as she herself felt it to be, the dullest possible matter of pious calculation, of good sense, of propriety; a creed, in fact, made up of negatives: but then, her positive desire that I should do her credit as a good linguist and musician, made me turn all my ardour towards those pursuits and studies against which she never warned me. Hour after hour at the harp or guitar could not make me either a Papist or a Methodist, the Scylla and Charybdis of poor Madame Croisart's imagination (for she had just enough to admit these bugbears): and when she returned to live with her son in France, and was succeeded by Miss Cooper, I had imbibed enough of those prejudices, to start, with undefined terror, at each opening proof given me by my new directress, of her religious fervour. But oh! the delight when these prejudices were conquered, and I awoke from the mere decencies and dull formalities of a routine which had never satisfied my heart! My uncle Edmund now took a deeper interest in me, and often fixed, in private, the impressions which his public discourses had begun. His ministry, and the exalted piety of Miss Cooper, were the means employed by my blessed Saviour to draw me to his love and service. Yes! it is the truth, that for a personal interest in all the gospel promises, I am indebted to the evangelical part of the Church of England, and I must in candour and gratitude give this testimony, although I am aware that, in so doing, I displease you, uncle. For two years I was a completely happy being, confiding in those who led me onward in the spiritual life, with the same implicit reliance, with which, as an Israelite, I should have followed the pillar of fire in the desert. I was interested and excited, but not alarmed, at the novelties introduced and discussed by the religious world, to which I was introduced in this neighbourhood. The doctrines of the Millennium, and of the near approach of the sacred Advent, were subjects so inspiring and engrossing, that for a time I seemed to tread on air, and my very dreams were fraught with visions of the glorious future. The first blow was a difference of opinion between my two idols, followed by an estrangement which nearly broke my heart. You remember, uncle Sinclair, that pamphlet, which my uncle Edmund dispersed amongst his flock, on early baptism?"

"Yes," said the Warden, "and, with the exception of that canting phraseology, which grows on Edmund more and more, that little pamphlet was the most sensible thing he ever wrote."

"And yet, uncle, that pamphlet was the first thing which drew on him the persecution of his religious friends here."

"His *professing* friends would be a better term," interposed Mr Everard.

"Ah! they were really religious people," continued Geraldine, "and thought him in dangerous error. Miss Cooper argued with, wept over him, and at length resolved, that as he had deliberately broken down the fence between the Evangelical and High Church, on the essential point of 'regeneration,' she ought no longer to 'sit under his ministry;' and from that time attended the new chapel of ease in Elverton, where that very affected Mr Oakley minces extemporally."

"And took you with her, I conclude," said the Warden, at length relaxing into a smile.

"No! for my father was at home, and therefore I was obliged to attend the old church, where I used to weep the whole time, excepting when I was roused to sit in judgment on my uncle's 'erroneous views,' and report them to Miss Cooper, who was at that time my Pope."

"Well! I am, at any rate, relieved, to find that the General was occasionally obeyed by this very pious lady and yourself," said Dr Sinclair, "for allow me to observe, that filial piety appears to enter rarely into the new decalogue of these religionists:—yet, depend upon it, that, if this fail, vain is all profession of religion."

"Indeed, uncle, I confess to have been, at this time, far less attentive and obedient to my father, than when drilled by poor Madame Croisart; for I was much elated by my supposed victory over the world, and at my clear and decided religious opinions. I was still fondly attached to my dear father; and there was ever that about him which commanded respect: yet Miss Cooper taught me to consider him a weak and worldly character, and myself as greatly his superior in religious experience; and even allowed herself to tell me, his child, that she shuddered, whenever she thought of his 'poor lost soul!' At that time I must have teased, and Miss Cooper have tortured, my father."

"And what said the General to all this?"

"Very little. He acted up to his favourite text,—'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy;' and endured every impertinence from us with marvellous patience. I read to him once, from a work which much engrossed me, the 'Ora-

tions' of Irving, to which he listened with his eyes shut, and at length said,—‘Thank you, my love, that will do till this day twelvemonth, when, perhaps, by bitter experience, you will have seen more into the subject of ‘this world,’ as connected with ‘Judgment to come.’”

“Could you have extracted from your father a distinct avowal of his opinions, you would have achieved more than any one has done before you,” observed the Warden; “but go on with your history.”

“I must condense it, or I shall weary you,” said Geraldine.—“The dissensions in the neighbourhood continued—friends became alienated, congregations dispersed. Two distinct parties had been formed, respecting ‘Regeneration in Baptism;’ these were now subdivided by the question of ‘Assurance,’ whether or not essential to salvation in the believer.”

“And pray which part did Edmund play there?”

“He took the moderate and judicious part, considering ‘assurance’ to be a last and crowning grace, after those of ‘regeneration’ and ‘sanctification:’ while Mr Oakley maintained, that regeneration could not be said to have taken place, where assurance of salvation was not conveyed to the soul.”

“Thank heaven for preserving your brain ‘for fresh fields and pastures new!’” exclaimed Mr Everard.

“Oh! this was not all,” continued Geraldine. “Poor Mr Oakley, who certainly could not be said to have ‘zeal without innovation,’ and who considered my uncle Edmund’s flock to be ‘hungry sheep who look up and are not fed,’ would ‘intrude into the fold,’ especially visiting the sick and dying, to enforce this doctrine of complete assurance of salvation. This conduct deeply wounded the duly appointed shepherd, but he contented himself with mild expostulations. Not so his vehement wife, who withdrew her aid from every cottager who ventured to receive Mr Oakley’s visits, and cut every acquaintance at whose house the intruder was known to expound or to pray, till at length by her resentment she effected the very object which Mr Oakley’s friends had most in view, that of making him appear as a persecuted and injured man. No open breach had yet taken place between my aunt and Miss Cooper, although, since the affair of the pamphlet, great coolness had subsisted, and the once pleasant intercourse between the hall and the vicarage had become full of constraint and suspicion. But now this question

of 'assurance,' and Mr Oakley, became so identified one with the other, that few distinguished between the doctrine and the man; amongst these few, Mrs Edmund Sinclair certainly could not be classed, and Miss Cooper, who did not hold Mr Oakley's opinions on that subject, was nevertheless supposed to do so, as she was of the 'Oakleyite party.' The remarks of one lady were repeated, or misrepresented to the other, and open war was at length declared. Fortunately there arrived, however, a new and overwhelming cause of excitement to the professing religionists in this neighbourhood, which for a time arrested all inferior sparkles, and shone like a bright meteor distinct and alone. This was the discovered possession of miraculous gifts of tongues and of healing in the 'only true church,' of half a score of persons, principally women, who had received these gifts of the Holy Spirit!"

"Ha! Edmund was there a little singed," exclaimed the Warden.

"Yes! and a partial reconciliation took place between himself and Miss Cooper, who forgave him his doctrine on baptism by water, in favour of his awakening views on the baptism of the Spirit. This reconciliation was in itself all balm and joy to me, and I was won over by this coincidence of feeling between my two friends, to trust, to listen, and to believe, till Edmund again withdrew, and, in doing so, explained to me most fully the awful risks he had run in lending himself to this heresy—for thus he scrupled not to call it. My father, too, no longer quiescent, forbade my ever meeting any of that dangerous community, and the time arrived when Miss Cooper and I were forced to part."

"Sing 'Oh be joyful,'" cried Mr Everard.

"It was far from joy to me, my dear Sir, for I not only lost with her a powerful intellect, a warm heart, and congeniality in pursuits, but I lost my prop and adviser in spiritual concerns, and, alas! I felt that I lost this friend for ever! Our forced parting was agony to both. I had by degrees lost all confidence in her judgment, and felt the double pang of having lost my trust in every human adviser: for after her departure, my poor uncle Edmund became involved in fresh doctrinal disputes; or rather, differences, for he never disputed. It was said that he held very alarming views on 'Election;' but I never inquired what they were. Sick at heart, and at length indisposed in health. I withdrew from all society termed 'serious' and hailed

with pleasure my kind father's proposal, to fetch my friend, Katherine Graham, from her uncle's, in Devonshire, and then to pass some time in visiting the coast. This we did, and should have lingered at that exquisite Clovelly, where I seemed to forget all the jar of controversy, had not my father's return home been hastened by the arrival in England of his long-expected guest, Don Carlos Duago."

"What a moment for a gallant Spaniard to arrive," cried Mr Everard; "just when the fair English girl had resolved to think no more of controversy!"

Geraldine coloured deeply, but replied,—“I had resolved to think no more of disputes amongst Protestants; but I had not yet doubted the truth of Protestantism. I was still bewitched by the study of prophecy, and looked on the Roman Catholic religion as the cage of every foul bird!”

“Until Don Duago warbled from it a strain of love and devotion,” again interrupted her tormentor.

“Mr Everard,” said Geraldine, beseechingly, “on this subject I am not self-deceived, and therefore I cannot deceive you. In the arguments I frequently held with Carlos Duago, I defended what I thought the truth, and the time was not arrived when the arguments of a Catholic could move me. He had no idea, when conversing with me, of the mistaken notions I had imbibed of his Church, and I took for granted that he was contending for doctrines, from which I now am aware he would have shrunk as much as myself. We therefore argued as people must ever do, when misled as to each other's opinions, that is, most unprofitably. It was not till, on my father's departure with his young friend for Spain, I removed to my godfather's, Lord Hungerford's, that I found Catholics (English Catholics) fully aware, not only of their real faith, but also of that attributed to them, and able, therefore, to combat more successfully.”

“Which new era in your life,” said Mr Everard, “leads us to the second history promised for our evening's amusement.”

“And to which I also am coming to listen,” cried Miss Graham, rising from her letter-writing. “I have shut my ears to the squabbles of my poor dear Evangelicals, but shall open them wide to the absurdities of the Papiets.”

Geraldine, however, entreated for a little rest, before she should proceed to her second controversial history, and gladly became a listener to her uncle and Mr Everard, as they com-

mented on the statement which she had given of the subdivisions of parties in the Evangelical world—a statement which even Miss Graham did not attempt to contradict, and of which the leading facts were too public to require corroboration. “Listen Sinclair, to this part of a letter in the correspondence of Bishop Jebb and Alexander Knox,” said Mr Everard, turning over the leaves of a new work, which he had brought that day as a present to his friend, the Warden. “Hear what one of those wise men remarks to the other, on the absurd notions of the religionists of the day: ‘You complain of Protestantism being unsystematic. How can it be otherwise? Some grand principles of interpretation must be so authoritatively laid down, that they cannot lawfully be contravened, before any thing like system can obtain. This would be the very antipode of Chillingworthian private judgment. But private judgment surely is inconsistent with the very notion of a science. How would the astronomer, the mathematician, the chymist, laugh at the asserter of private judgment! Would not a person be accounted mad, were he to say, the moon is made of green cheese, I maintain it, I have a right to do so, it is my private judgment! Two and two make five—it is my private judgment. Gold and brass have the same weight, properties, and value—it is my private judgment! Yet this ridiculous farce is every day enacted in theology—and this is Protestantism. Is divinity then unphilosophical? Has it no principles? Is it no science? I trow otherwise. How could any human science (I will not say) advance, nay how could it be taught, if principles were thus thrown aside? And what hopes may we not hold of the advancement of theology when principles shall be held as tenaciously as by the Church of Rome, without her accompaniment of error? This surely is a comfortable prospect.’ And with these principles in our theological horizon,” added Mr Everard, “we may lean back in our chairs, and listen to the fair Geraldine.”

CHAPTER VIII.

“Prejudice is ever ready to accumulate supposition upon supposition, and bury truth under the hills of its own piling.”

Whitaker.

“WHEN after the departure of my dear father I spent the summer of last year with Lord and Lady Hungerford,” said GERALDINE.

dine, "I became of course acquainted with all the numerous visitors, who succeeded each other in that 'hospitable mansion,' as the Morning Post would describe it. It happened that, on my arrival, the party was not large, and the opportunity afforded of insight into each other's opinions and characters was therefore greater. I found Lady Hungerford and most of her guests occupied with a work by a Rev. Mr Blanco White, which placed the Roman Catholic religion in a most unfavourable light, and therefore was gladly handed from one person to another, and became the text book whence to draw materials for animated discourse. The following day a young stranger, introduced to me and the other visitors by Lord Hungerford as Sir Eustace de Grey, asked me, when the topics in "Doblado's Letters" were again brought forward, whether I had ever met with, or heard of, the reply given to that work by a Catholic priest?" On my answering in the negative, "I expected as much," said he. "I am a Catholic, living constantly amongst Protestants, many of whom I love and respect as dear and esteemed friends; yet shall I own to you, that I find them, with but few exceptions, breaking through one of God's express commandments, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour!' As an instance in point, the calumnies written by an apostate priest, who owns that, during ten years, he acted a lie—these calumnies are believed at once and for ever, without one attempt to hear a word on the other side, before passing judgment. Every Protestant is ready to taunt me with, 'Have you read Doblado's Letters?' but when I reply, 'Yes! and have you read the answer?' the reply invariably is 'No!' So much for Protestant justice."

"Very fair! very good," cried Mr Everard; "but you do not tell us how you liked De Grey's manners and appearance, on your first acquaintance?"

"Everard," said the Warden gravely, "my niece is very properly confining her thoughts to subjects of more importance, than those to which you would turn her attention. It can signify but little to a daughter of General Carrington, by what vehicle is conveyed to her the substance of an opposed creed."

"I will candidly tell you, Mr Everard," said Geraldine smiling, "that, when made aware of Sir Eustace being a practical as well as theoretical Catholic, by the days of abstinence which he strictly kept; the ride before breakfast *every* morning to hear

mass at Burnleigh ; the rapid sign of the cross when grace was said at dinner, with several other Catholic habits which were openly mentioned around me, I took an interest in your friend, which I should not have felt under other circumstances ; for I cannot describe the strange effect produced on my mind by having the Catholic faith displayed to me by this young countryman ! He was the first Catholic Englishman I ever conversed with ; and to be persuaded that, in these enlightened days, a highly educated and rather satirical Englishman, could believe in the spiritual supremacy of the Pope, go to confession to a priest, do penance, invoke the Virgin, and pray for the dead ; no ! it was impossible ; such absurdities must have given way to the universal light bursting in even upon that wilfully dark and foolish old Church ! As I found that young De Grey bore with the greatest good humour the rough Protestant jokes of Lord Hungerford, and the impracticable prejudices of her ladyship, I also ventured to inquire, with due politeness, into the present actual belief of the Roman Catholic Church ?

“ ‘The *present* belief,’ said he, ‘*why, that which was the ancient belief.*—The Catholic Church, from her very nature, cannot change.

“ ‘Alas !’ cried I, ‘how melancholy a state of things ! I had often been told this of the Catholic Church, but believed it impossible, that, in spite of every warning, she should persist in such—pardon me, but are you obliged to believe *every* thing she teaches ?’

“ ‘Certainly, every dogma ; but as to matters of discipline, and of pious opinions and practices, not pronounced upon by Church authority, we may theorize as we like. But perhaps,’ continued he, ‘you will allow me to show you what we ‘Papists’ really do believe, and then, although you will pity us less, you will respect us somewhat more.’

“ ‘At night, my maid placed on my toilet a sealed packet, containing Gother’s ‘Papist Misrepresented and Represented ;’ and when I look back on my then state of ignorance, I feel that I could not have received a better primer than that little work. You know, Katherine, my contempt for minds which require repetitions of arguments, and my weariness of books that are spun out with them. Here the whole strength of the little book was in simple statements, and the whole weakness and weariness was in my own prejudiced mind. I read and won-

dered, and read again, till daybreak. Every article of the Catholic creed is first 'misrepresented,' and contains the usual belief amongst Protestants, of what is the faith of a Papist. The same article is then 'represented,' and contains the actual and unchangeable doctrine of the Catholic Church."

"And why was all this so interesting to you?" interrupted Miss Graham. "We may very possibly misjudge the Quakers, or the Unitarians; yet never have you evinced the least curiosity to possess more than historical knowledge respecting these sects."

"First, Katherine, because they *are* 'sects,' and every sect is on too small a scale to satisfy my idea of the vastness, the universality, of the visible Church of Christ: next, because these, and all sects, believe less even than does the Church of England, and therefore could not tempt me. I have ever loved to be with those whose faith exceeds my own."

"I hope you are, however, aware, child," interposed the Warden, "that if you push this idea to an extremity, you will be led into countless absurdities."

A servant here entered with a packet, apparently of books, directed to Mr Everard, which, on opening, proved to come from the object of their late discussion, accompanied by the following note:—

"Dear Sir,—Will you offer, with my most respectful compliments, the accompanying volumes to Miss Carrington; and should they be thought worthy, after perusal, of a place in her library, I shall feel much honoured. I remain, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

EUSTACE DE GREY."

"Everard," exclaimed the Warden, in a tone of deep displeasure, and laying his hand on the books, "is it fitting that, in the absence of General Carrington, his daughter should be betrayed by those who should supply his place, and be exposed to the dangerous subtleties of a proselyting Papist, who doubtless would find his own profit in converting this only child and heiress, to the Church of which he is the champion?"

"I will return this answer to De Grey, it being just characteristic of that charity which 'thinketh no evil.'" returned Mr Everard, while his little eyes sparkled indignantly: "but let us first look at the books.—Ha! Why, Geraldine, I could have lent

you this work ; capital !—incomparable !—by Berington and Kirk—‘ The Faith of Catholics confirmed by Scripture, and attested by the Fathers of the five first Centuries of the Church.’ ”

“ The five first centuries ! ” exclaimed Geraldine. “ Oh ! how delightful ! how opportune ! These are exactly the pure and holy ages in the Universal Church, which the Church of England receives ; and which five centuries comprise the four first General Councils, which are also admitted as having been guided by the Spirit of God. During those ages, the Catholic Church and the Church of England were the same in doctrine. This you have fully explained to me yourself, my dear uncle : there can be, therefore, no possible danger in my taking advantage of the labours of these two Catholics, Berrington and Kirk, in making extracts from the Greek and Latin writers. But how very extraordinary that Sir Eustace should have sent me a work that must confirm me in my own Church ! ”

“ I have most assuredly told you,” said the Warden, “ that our holy and Apostolic Church of England does claim those five first centuries, which the Romanists also claim. Give them up the early ages of the Church, and they may then well charge us with heresy and schism ; for departure from the Church is most guilty in the sight of God, who has declared, that those who hear her not, are as heathens.”

“ And how am I to be certain that I belong to that very Church which Christ has promised to be with to the end of the world ? ” said Geraldine. “ I cannot trust to my own private judgment in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, having, by painful experience, seen the evil effects of this. I cannot, as an unlearned woman, search the original writings of those holy men termed the ‘ Fathers of the Church ; ’ how much, then, should I be interested and benefited by reading a translation of their unanimous opinion on each point of doctrine now contested between the two Churches.”

“ But do you expect,” said Dr Sinclair, “ to find impartial extracts collected by Roman Catholics ? Are you not thrown on your guard by the very circumstance of these extracts being sent you for the purpose of your conversion ? ”

“ I would not read these Catholic extracts only, I would read the Protestant extracts also, compare each with Scripture, and then decide which followed more closely the apostolic model.

Pray, uncle, where can I find a similar work (on the Church of England side) to this attractively sounding book?"

"I do not think I can name any one on precisely this plan," returned the Warden, "but you can consult the Fathers of the English Church, those venerated champions of the primitive faith, and, besides these sure guides, you will find, in our admirable Liturgy, a combination of whatever is sound in faith, elevated in devotion, and productive of benevolent and holy practice. Hold but that form of sound words, and there will be but little danger of heresy or schism. The Liturgy of the Church of England may be termed the exposition of her faith, a commentary on Scripture, a treasure which cannot be guarded too carefully, or studied too deeply. Its spirit holds commune with antiquity, that antiquity for which you seek, and which gives it a rank inferior only to the Bible."

Geraldine paused, and then replied: "I see that there is no medium to the unlearned, between choosing their creed right or wrong from the Bible, or else taking their own Church completely for granted: and, in fact, the vast bulk of mankind, who throughout centuries could not read, have not had this choice, but must ever have looked on the minister appointed over them as their guide, their infallible guide. I also perceive that every teacher in these days, of those who cannot read, whether in the Established Church, or amongst Dissenters, must of necessity stand to them in the stead of God's word, and of the orthodox commentary on that word which they cannot read. Scripture never once implies it to be necessary for my salvation that I should know even my alphabet; and yet, without it, I must confide in some direct authority that cannot lead me astray."

"You are right, my dear. The minister who has been duly ordained does stand in the place of God's written word, to him who cannot read: and if, with fervent prayer, he implore God's blessing on his instructions, he may rest assured that he will not be led into vital error."

"Do not be displeased, uncle, if I can only say that I *hope* he will not be led into vital error; for I have no assurance that he will not. I see plainly, that in every denomination of Bible Christians, Baptist, Quaker, Unitarian, Calvinist, Church of England, as well as Roman Catholic, all those who cannot read must listen to their minister's interpretation of Scripture, with the same faith as if he were inspired by the Holy Ghost. He

must be to them as the voice of God. What is to become of these millions of the unlearned, trusting to false teachers? Explain to me this difficulty, uncle."

"It is a difficulty, Geraldine; but with those sects and their teachers, you, individually, have nothing to do. Keep clear of abstract questions; abstain from all attempts to dive into the permission of evil; for we are told that 'offences must come,' and are, at the same time, told that 'woe will be unto them by whom they come.' Rest contented with your own easy task of obedience to the duly ordained minister, appointed over you in the pure and holy Church of England."

"Then you do believe, after all," cried Geraldine, "that our ministers, if they strictly adhere to the doctrines of their Church, are overruled by the Holy Ghost, to direct me right. You do believe, then, that the Church of England is infallible! Speak, uncle! answer me, for God's sake."

"I do believe," at length returned the Warden, "that inasmuch as the Church of England approaches nearest to the apostolic model, so has she the greatest portion of God's Holy Spirit to direct her. Yet, in her humility, she claims not infallibility, as I will show you by reading the twentieth of her articles, 'On the Authority of the Church.'—'The Church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith. And it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's written word; neither may it so expound one part of Scripture that it may be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of holy writ, yet, as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so, besides the same, ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of salvation."

Geraldine slowly repeated the last clause of the article—"so ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for the necessity of salvation." What! not *any thing*?—Not the doctrine of the Holy Trinity? Not the redemption of mankind? Not the joyful hope of a resurrection through Christ?"

"Yes! Geraldine, for those doctrines are according to the written word."

"No! uncle; the first of them is not so to the conscientious Arian and Socinian; neither is Baptism nor the Lord's Supper to the scrupulous mind of the Quaker;" and Geraldine paused in deep thought during several minutes. Mr Everard continued in

resolute silence, the Warden the same ; but just as the latter prepared to speak, Geraldine said abruptly, " Uncle, who wrote those articles ? "

" My dear, I thought you knew that, in the reign, and under the headship, of Queen Elizabeth, these articles, previously drawn up, were then solemnly confirmed and ratified by the Archbishops and Bishops of the Upper House, and by the subscription likewise of the Lower House, in their convocation held in the year 1571."

" And that convocation," said Geraldine anxiously, " did not claim the guidance of the Holy Ghost—did not, in plain terms, claim infallibility ? "

" Certainly not ' infallibility ; ' but we trust and believe that the assistance of the Holy Spirit was given them in this re-modelling and purification of the Church of Christ."

" How *can* you make this distinction, uncle, between infallibility and the overruling power of the Holy Ghost in the councils of the Church ? And how can you praise as humility that want of faith in Christ's promises to ' guide his Church into all truth ? ' How can the convocation or council, which Christ directs, be fallible ? This is not humility ; this is want of faith ; and I recal to mind your own instructions to me, years ago, when, on my birthday, you brought me a set of beautiful Scripture prints, and encouraged my childish comments on them. I told you that I could not understand why Esau was not praised for giving up the grandeur of the eldest son, and contenting himself with the simple hardy life he led ; that I thought there was something quite equal to the philosophers I had read about in my Greek stories, when Esau throws up his birthright for the mess of pottage. You then took me on your knee, and explained to me all those promises from God, which were contained in that ' birthright,' which, not in humility and self-denial, but in impious contempt or disbelief, Esau had sacrificed to his temporal convenience ; and you softened my anger against Jacob, whose face I had torn with a pin in the print of the ' Father's Blessing,' while I wept over and kissed the unfortunate Esau, by representing to me, that although the *means* were unjustifiable by which Jacob obtained the birthright and the blessing, and although God severely punished him through life for his deceit, yet the desire to obtain these blessings, the high price he set on them, the trust he showed in God's promises—*these* were most praiseworthy ! and while

Jacob was punished by temporal chastisements for his fault, he was rewarded by spiritual blessings for his faith. Uncle, I have, ever since that explanation, made the distinction between a false and a laudable ambition, between distrust and humility; and I feel that I must apply all this now to the Church of England. She has not shown a laudable ambition for God's gifts. She has shown distrust, not humility, with respect to his glorious promises. She has, in fact, like Esau, thrown away her birthright of infallibility, for the mess of pottage she has gained in temporal advantages."

"No! no! child, not so fast, though you make out your case pretty closely. -But I will still vindicate the Church of England from the heavy charges you prefer against her. Holding the same doctrines, and following the example of the early Church, if she hesitate in assuming to *herself* the high title of 'infallibility,' she is the guardian and defender of that which was, and is, infallible; she is the preserver of the faith once delivered to the Saints, and therefore worthy of implicit trust."

Geraldine here pressed her hand to her forehead, and remained some time silent: at length she exclaimed, "Then, uncle, I think I understand at last!—As the Church of England is, in essentials, exactly the same with the early Catholic Church of the first five centuries, inasmuch as that Church was infallible, because still pure from its apostolic founders, so also is the Church of England; but she cannot *enforce* any thing that is not proved to have been held by that early Church, and, of course, must not *deny* any thing, clearly flowing from that Apostolic source?"

"You are right, Geraldine."

"Well! uncle, I am satisfied; and I believe, shall be now, from this time, a very high Church woman, following strictly all the rules laid down for my practice in the 'Book of Common Prayer,' and endeavouring to recall all the wandering sheep of the flock into the one fold. My next interesting task will be the study of those pure ages in Church history, with which we claim kindred and communion; and, in the mean time, I thank you, my dear kind uncle, for all your patience and trouble with me. But for you, I should have confounded our Church with the other Protestant communities; but for you, I should ere this have mistaken as you have said, 'the reverse of wrong for right,' and have become a Roman Catholic!"

CHAPTER IX.

If God, like man, his purpose could renew,
His laws could vary, or his plans undo,
Desponding faith would droop its cheerless wing,
Religion deaden to a lifeless thing.

Boyce.

THE Library at Elverton Hall had once been the principal room in the old mansion; the noble suite, comprising saloon, anti-rooms, and dining-room, with the conservatory, having been built by General Carrington's father, together forming a somewhat uncouth wing, everything being permitted to the irregular order of the Elizabethan or old manor-house style, in which the building had been encased. The original date was far anterior, and to this date belonged the library and noted hall, the latter reaching, with its midway gallery to the top of the building, and exhibiting specimens of oak-work and of painted glass, that still excited the admiration of the connoisseur, and subjected its owner to the penalty of appointing one day in the week, in which visitors, conducted by the late housekeeper, Mrs Goodwin were permitted to view this hall, and, as the good woman termed them, the "state apartments," in which the spacious and well-filled library was included. No visitors, however, had approached since the raging of the cholera, and Geraldine fearlessly descended, on the following morning, by her private staircase, to the library, to look over the list of books, and bring back to her uncle an account of the various ecclesiastical histories there to be found. Having read the catalogue, she had just mounted one of the moveable steps, which, like a pulpit and its stair, were in each corner of the room, when she perceived Mr Everard suddenly arrested, and gazing at her with eyes extended and with lips apart.—Greeting him gaily from her elevated station, Geraldine bade him mount, and help her to remove from their shelves the works she required; but Mr Everard stirred not, and called to her not to change her position, and, above all, not to look at him, with which seemingly capricious and unaccountable request Geraldine complied, during a few seconds; after which, having secured the first Volumes of Fuller, Mosheim, and Milner, she slowly descended the steps, and stood by the side of her old friend. "Ah! those eyes," cried he, "they spoil every thing! When they are turned away, and as you stood just now, I thought I saw your mother, as she used to stand, full twenty

years ago, mounted upon those very steps, forgetting even to bring away the treasure of learning she had found, and there she would read motionless for hours. Ah! that was a mind, which, from its very fulness, was enlarged to boundless charity. You inherit from her, Geraldine, this eagerness for knowledge—but you live in better times.”

“And what was the theological result of these deep studies of my beloved mother?” said Geraldine, her dark eyes filling with tears, which moved the old gentleman to forgive their shape and hue.

“The result,” said he, “led her to accompany me to my Utopia: but alas! the thread of her sweet life was snapped!—Ah me! . . . we will talk of other things, girl.—Tell me the present state of your mind?”

“Why it is this,” said Geraldine: “I am bound to believe, till I am forced to disbelieve, that my Church is the pure Apostolic Church of those early centuries, which were undeviatingly faithful to the doctrines preached by the Apostles. I am wishing, therefore, to establish this truth on my mind, by reading Protestant Church History again, with deeper attention than when in the school-room. My uncle Edmund presented me, years ago, with Milner’s History; but the Warden tells me that Joseph Milner, though a well-meaning man, is a weak historian, and recommends Mosheim. I therefore intend to read both; and, as facts are my aim, and not sentiments, I care not who is high or who is low Church.”

“Mosheim was neither,” said Mr Everard; “he was a Dutch Lutheran, and the work is dedicated to his patron, the Prince of Orange.”

“Better and better!” cried Geraldine; “he will then be impartial, as far as the Church of England is concerned. But how strange it is, Mr Everard, that my uncle should be liberal enough to recommend the historical accuracy of one, whose Church, on the awful question of the Eucharist, differs so much from the Church of England!”

“Ah! not so much,” replied he, “as would appear in the cavils of controversy. My theory is, that, if those of opposite creeds would but calmly listen to the statement of those apparently opposed to them, there would be but little discordance left in the world.”

“But surely, Mr Everard, between the Protestant and the Romanist——”

"Do not call the Roman Catholics by any nickname, unless in return, you can bear yourself to be called 'heretic.' The Universal Church, in communion with its chief bishop, the Roman Pontiff, takes the title of Catholic, or Roman Catholic, and between this Church and that of the Reformed Church of England, there is so little difference, that I verily believe, if the Pope had, in the sixteenth century, understood the limits of his temporal authority, as well as he now understands them, and if our kings had never been blindly flattered into the usurpation of the spiritual authority, and if, also, matters of mere discipline had been treated in a spirit of mutual concession, I say, we never should have had to mourn over this rending asunder the seamless robe of Christ."

"Still Mr Everard, you must allow, that the differences between the Churches comprise more than a misunderstanding of terms, or a mere quarrel of supremacy."

"Not at first," replied he. "All that Luther wanted, was a reform of abuses—and *there* he was right; as in our times, the friends of the Establishment are very justly wishing for the same reform of abuses. But watch the progress of all these reforms, when they shall be *forced* upon the Church by the indignation of the people, instead of being wisely and promptly undertaken by the rulers. You will find that, not content with doing away with pluralities and sinecures, and the surplus riches of the Church Establishment of England, the Liturgy will be attacked,—first abridged, then abolished,—the Sacraments considered empty forms,—and the Lord of Misrule will gain the ascendency, and put all to the rout, because our Leo the Tenth and his cardinals will not see their danger—a danger, all the greater from the taste of reform which this nation has already had, and which, like the taste of blood to the wild beasts in the arena, excites to more."

"And what will be the end of all this?" said Geraldine.

"The bringing in of my Utopia," replied Mr Everard.

"Or, in other words," returned she, "that universal Millennium, which was once my own day-dream."

"Not exactly," said he. "That belief of the coming thousand years of blessedness, which, at the end of the tenth century, caused trade to languish, and buildings to fall in ruins unrepaired, which, reviving with sectarian fury in the civil wars of England, again sank into obscurity, until these days, prolific with excitement,—that belief was connected with the second Advent of our

Lord, and the Millennium expected to be a dispensation wholly miraculous. Now, my Utopian scheme is simply this—That a learned and dispassionate deputy should be sent from each Protestant community, to confer with a Catholic peace-maker from the papal court: that, on the part of Rome, *every* point of mere discipline, repugnant to the different national habits and feelings of those so long estranged, should be conceded: that the Liturgy, for instance, should be recited in the vernacular language of each nation, the marriage of the clergy allowed, and Communion in both kinds permitted:—while, on the side of the Protestants, there should be a readiness to sacrifice each something for the common harmony; and having experienced how little the mere protesting against Rome has done for the promotion of their faith and piety, let them reflect that in an Universal Church, including various nations, national asperities should melt in brotherly love.—Let each nation have a representative at Rome, where, for the sake of the inestimable blessing of unity, the head bishop may reside: and, as there can be but one head, let no pitiful jealousy, under the name of national pride, prevent a decent respect, and official obedience, being rendered to him, who, at least, is as capable of giving aright the casting vote in ecclesiastical councils, as our own lay sovereigns; especially, when it is recollected that we may have, in consequence of hereditary succession, a woman or a child for the head of the English Church."

"Ha! Everard," exclaimed the Warden, who had entered the library at this his accustomed hour, and had overheard the last sentiments uttered by his friend, "you are harping still on that old chord—the union of the Protestant communities with that of Rome, a chord which jarred in the hands of Bossuet and Leibnitz, never again to make 'sweet harmony.'"

"Pardon me, Warden, that chord of harmony shall be restrung, in days ripe for such glorious peace-making. In the time of the great Leibnitz, there was still too much ferment in the minds of men, to suffer the Lutheran Church to avail herself of the immense concessions made by the Bishop of Meaux! Concessions embracing every point of discipline; while, on the two grand articles of Protestant separation, namely, the 'Eucharist,' and 'Justification,' the combatants had only to explain calmly and clearly their real belief, and the difference in faith which remained was but the shadow of a shade."

"It was Molanus, not Leibnitz, who was then engaged with

Bossuet, each as the voice of his party," rejoined the accurate Warden.

"I know it," said Mr Everard, "but hang the mere name of a man:—it is as the voice of his Protestant community that his testimony is chiefly valuable."

"To me," said the Warden, "these several approaches to reunion, and these several failures, prove that, if, after dispassionate and friendly inquiry, the separation still continue, there must be solemn articles of belief on either side, which no conscientious mind can relinquish; and I own," continued he, while he crossed his arms resolutely, and drew himself up to his full height, "I have no opinion of your conceders, of your explainers away, of your approximators, and amalgamators of vitally opposed doctrines."

"Well! well! Sinclair, but you will allow that they are the little, ignorant, and conceited minds, which heap the mounds of separation; and that if people would but understand each other's real faith, it would be found that the actual differences are but few."

"They are few, Everard, but they are gigantic! I honour, with you, that loftiness of mind, that wide range of vision which fixes on the great and the essential, leaving to the vulgar crowd the 'mint' and the 'thyme.' Bossuet conceded the points of discipline, but knew too well the awful thunders of his Church, to tamper with her faith. Let the upright and the conscientious, on either side, respect each other, but never attempt the impossible task of union."

"Certainly, never attempt that which is impossible; but I persist that a union is not impossible."

"Tut! tut! Everard, a truce, for pity's sake," cried the Warden, settling himself into his morning's course of reading, while his friend strode up and down the room; and Geraldine, finding, on opening the first volumes of her three histories, that Milner appeared by far the most interesting, retreated with that book to her boudoir, and was occupied by it till the hour of her daily ride. She was deeply engaged in the same work, when the little party met in the evening; but Mr Everard requested some music, and when, at the expiration of an hour, Geraldine was allowed to rise from the instrument, it was on condition that she should not read, but talk. "Come, come!" said he, "these are the little trials of temper, perhaps the only real ones which

cross the path of the fair nymph of Elverton. As for parting from broken-hearted adorers, or running into controversial deliriums, there is flash and dash about all that of a vastly imposing nature ; but, trust me, that to leave Milner and the early saints, for the sake of sitting by an old sinner, to cheer and soothe him, is worth all your high tragedy."

"May I listen while you speak?" said Geraldine, laughing, as she leaned back on the sofa near her lively old friend.

"No ! Tell me first to what you alluded, during our ride this morning, when you spoke of the Protestant father confessor, who had given you such warnings, and described such dangers, without, however, providing for you either remedy or resource?"

"I was referring to a clergyman of the Established Church," replied Geraldine, "whom I met in London during the last season ; when having, in addition to Sir Eustace De Grey's defence of his Church, listened repeatedly to that of his aunt, Lady Winefride Blount, and became curious to hear more, I overheard this Rev. Mr P——, in conversation one evening, at a serious party at Lady Lucy Forster's make some comments, which I never forgot. 'The present state of the Protestant world,' said he, 'is one of curious contemplation to the philosopher ; and one of deep anxiety and pain to the Christian. Infidelity stalks over the land, and will persecute where it dare. The Romish apostasy was superstition and idolatry ; the Protestant apostasy is infidelity and anarchy. Each contains in its vital constitution the seeds of these corruptions and abuses. The Romish persecutions have been dreadful, but the infidel persecutions will be far worse ; inasmuch as an idolater feels himself responsible to his false god, and the infidel is responsible to nothing.—A God obscured is better than a God denied ! . . . The Roman Catholic Church is right, respecting the *power* of miraculous gifts in the Church of Christ. There is a constant misapprehension respecting the *power* and the *exhibition* of miracles. If miracles were needless, except in the revelation of a new dispensation, why did they continue in the Jewish Church after it was firmly established ? Can it be supposed that God would bestow his gifts less on the Christian, than on the Jewish, Church ? Miracles *are* granted to a faithful Church.' Much struck by these remarks, I requested to be introduced to this clergyman, to whom every one seemed to listen with as much attention as myself ; and from that evening Mr P—— became a

frequent visitor in Berkeley Square. I had hitherto frequented the chapel in — Street, where I had always been interested and instructed, and where Mr P—— had himself occasionally officiated; but my new adviser now warned me against the dangerous doctrines that were gradually creeping in at M—— Chapel, without being able, however, to fix for me whither to go instead: ‘For,’ added he, ‘the evangelical body is at present so infected with various heresies, that I know not where you would be safe.’ ‘As a resident in Berkeley Square,’ said I, ‘my parish Church is St George’s; but all my religious friends assured me, that from the High Church party I should hear nothing that could improve me.’ ‘Very true,’ replied Mr P——; ‘you would never hear the true Gospel from any of the preachers at the great West-end churches. However, do not let this state of things lead you into dissent; for much as I may warn you against the parties in the Church, I doubly warn you against the dissenters. I have passed much of my life amongst them, and you may trust my experience, that their pride and arrogance are perfectly antichristian. No!’ added he, ‘the more intercourse I have held with the dissenters, the less I have liked them:—keep clear of them!’”

“Ha!” cried the Warden, suddenly roused from a reverie, “a sensible man that:—who was he?”

“The same man, my dear sir, who assured me, that I could never hear the true Gospel from the preachers of the High Church.”

The Warden was again silent and abstracted, and Geraldine continued. “Mr P—— then inquired whose ministry I attended, when in the country? and, on my speaking of my dear uncle Edmund—of his piety, his zeal, his usefulness—‘Yes,’ said he, ‘Edmund Sinclair is a good man! we were friends at Cambridge—both at that time staunch Simeonites; but take care of his notions on ‘Election,’ for he has a considerable twist on that point.’”

“‘Positively, sir,’ cried I, equally vexed and amused, ‘as I am in such imminent danger from those of my own communion, I had better take refuge in the Catholic Church, where no difference of religious opinion is permitted.’”

“‘The *Roman* Catholic Church, you mean,’ replied Mr P——. ‘No!—you must not take so wild a step as that would be. You must not leave the pure worship of God for all those awful superstitions. The Romanists, however, have the right

on their side in many things. They have indeed. But now, added he, 'Farewell! for I must leave London within an hour:—Farewell! read your Bible, pray fervently, and rest satisfied that the 'assurance of faith in the believer,' is the highest perfection in the Christian course, and a foretaste of the time when Christ will be all in all.'

"Thus ended my conferences with Mr P——, for I have never seen him since: but truly may he console his conscience by the recollection, that, into whatever mistaken community I may hereafter enter, or whether I remain in my own, he has given me warning against every one! Of course, however, he left me more bewildered than ever, and I was not made more tranquil by my return hither, some weeks after, where the religious dissensions to which I have alluded, continued at their full height. In some long and interesting conversations with my uncle Edmund, in our evening walks, he unfolded to me his many trials in the ministry,—the want of confidence amongst his parishioners, who were all more ready to teach than to be taught,—the want of cordial support amongst his brother clergy, some suspecting him of erroneous doctrine he had never held, while others were jealous of a popularity he had never sought, and which had proved as evanescent as it had been unprofitable. I had not the cruelty to tell this dear persecuted being of the charge made against him of erroneous doctrine, by his friend Mr P.; nor did I in the least care what his views on Election might be. All the truth and warmth of my sympathy were his. I forgot to speak of myself, I thought only of the unhappy destiny of this pious and devoted child of God, as he continued to give me his confidence; a confidence, part of which I hold sacred now and for ever. After this I consulted no one, and endeavoured to persuade myself, that differences amongst Christians on doctrinal points, signified but little, provided they held that of the Redemption, when my attention and interest were awakened afresh by the establishment, in Elverton, of a branch Reformation Society, which was the first announcement to me, and to hundreds besides, that Catholics existed in the county and county town."

"Mr Everard smiled, and observed,—“I asked a Catholic priest, the other day, to what he attributed the extraordinary revival of Catholicity in these days? To which he replied,—‘Under the blessing of Almighty God, first to the cholera, next to the Reformation Society!’”

"But," continued Geraldine, "just let me recapitulate the various parties in the neighbourhood, who each thought themselves alone in possession of the truth and their opponents in vital error; and then, imagine the leaders of these parties, meeting in committee, and holding forth on platforms against the 'common enemy,' when, had the conversion of any one Catholic been the consequence of their 'much speaking' they would inevitably have driven their convert distracted, by the various plans offered him for his salvation. I never yet have been guilty of a caricature; but I cannot help sketching mentally the new-made Protestant, surrounded by his reformation friends, each dragging him a different way. 'Regeneration,' 'Election,' 'Sanctification,' 'Perseverance,' 'Assurance,' had spilt the Elverton world into five parties; so that the hapless convert must have been more than quartered to have contented them!"

"No such catastrophe, however, occurred," said Mr Everard: "for, some months ago, I questioned the principal leaders respecting the effect of their two years' labour, and they replied, that they trusted that the bread thus cast upon the waters, would come up in course of time, and that, to strengthen and confirm the faith of Protestants, was, in these perilous times, worth all the labour and expense of the meeting; but they acknowledged no conversion to have taken place at Elverton."

"It was an important era in my mental history," said Geraldine, "this first Reformation meeting; for it led to my knowledge of the hitherto unknown Mr Bernard, the Catholic priest. But all this I must reserve for to-morrow, for I hear the servants assembling for evening prayers, and my uncle has instinctively awoke. Katherine, the prayer-book is by you."

"Oh! that eternal Liturgy!" ejaculated Miss Graham, in a whisper, to Geraldine, as the latter placed the venerated book on a small table near the Warden, and all knelt in prayer.

CHAPTER X.

"When you are all agreed upon the time," says the curate, "I will make it rain."

Italian Proverb.

"WELL! now for some more scenes from the 'reformed world,'" said Mr Everard, as, on the following morning, he again obliged Geraldine first to sing and then to talk.

"Shall I give you," returned she, "a description of the last party I was at, termed 'serious,' and which immediately preceded my determination to become acquainted with Mr Bernard?"

"To be sure I will have it," said the old gentleman; "and pray be graphic and methodical."

"Then I must first acquaint you, my dear Sir, with the existing plan, amongst the pious families in Elverton and its neighbourhood, to meet every Wednesday at the house of each in turn, and to invite the clergymen of the place to attend alternately, in order to read and expound a chapter of the Bible at the close of the evening, followed by an extempore prayer, and generally a hymn."

"And what preceded this?" said Mr Everard.

"Oh, everything in proper keeping—sober conversation, and plenty of tea and tea-cakes."

"What do you mean by sober conversation? All those deep subjects which run so lightly off your tongue, and were settled in a trice by yourself and Miss Cooper, while they are approached with the profoundest awe by learned theologians, namely, those of 'Regeneration,' 'Election,' and so on?"

"Exactly so," replied Geraldine, blushing at the remembrance of her former flippancy and presumption. "The most awful points of doctrine were discussed by the youngest of my sex at these parties, nor did this strike me at the time as unseemly, except once, when, having arrived late one evening, an old lady politely made room for me by her, and, wishing to make my introduction easy to the many who were strangers around me, said graciously and smilingly, while she handed me some tea, 'We were just speaking, Miss Carrington, of the *Eternity* of punishment in hell,—what is your view of the subject?'"

"Impossible!" cried Mr Everard.

"Not at all impossible," said Geraldine; "for this actually occurred,—and the eternity or non-eternity of the divine wrath was a sixth point of disagreement in the Elverton world, which I forgot to mention."

"Well!" sighed Mr Everard, "tell me about this last party," and then let us have done with these people for ever."

"This last party," continued Geraldine, "was at the house of a lady who, during the summer months, delighted in showing hospitality to those London preachers who had benefited her soul during the winter and spring. And on this occasion she had

secured, to her great transport, the three most celebrated 'lions' of the day. Benevolent and expansive in all her feelings, she desired that her country neighbours should partake in the religious excitement which gave herself such occupation ; and my friend, Miss Graham, was invited with me to spend a long evening at the Grove. Poor Katherine had anticipated much pleasure from this 'long evening ;' but, unfortunately, we were separated soon after our entrance, and she was seated near some ladies who would not speak to her, because, as they afterwards confessed, they had mistaken her for 'another Miss Graham,' who was supposed to hold very alarming views on the doctrine of 'miraculous gifts!' I was conducted by Lady S — to a place near the three celebrated preachers and divines, who were endeavouring to feel happy and at their ease ; but my next neighbour informed me, in a whisper, that neither of them had wished to meet the others ! Two of them had been bosom friends, but had become estranged on the subject of the Apocryphal Books being disseminated by the Bible Society : while the third reverend brother dreaded himself, and was dreaded by the others, on the awful subject of the 'humanity of Christ.' The conversation, therefore between these talented and really pious men, was guarded and constrained. No spirit, no frankness, no eloquence. Fortunately, however, for themselves and the listening assembly, the daring attempt of a Catholic priest to hire a room in Elverton for the purpose of a temporary chapel, was mentioned by one of the company. Instantly all brows were cleared ; the reverend trio looked confidently at each other ; the delusions, the dangers, the alarming increase of Popery, were so many safety valves for their own uncomfortable feelings, and the conversation became as animated as it was friendly. I listened to anecdote after anecdote, respecting public controversies, wherein the Popish priest was always foiled in his sophistry by the spear of Protestant truth ! Then followed some accounts of conversions to the 'truth' of even the priests themselves ; and all wound up by histories from Ireland of Popish delusion and of Popish cruelty, so well vouched for, and of such recent occurrence, that the amusement and excitement of the evening became quite inspiring ! All crowded round the alternate speakers, and actually forgot 'clear views' and 'sound views' on doctrinal points, till, the clock announcing the hour of ten, the lady of the house, and several of her female coadjutors, collected for the purpose of a whispered

consultation, as to which of the holy divines should be requested by her ladyship to expound the chapter on that evening. Again was to be distinguished the condemnation, 'not sound;' then, after more consultation, the next choice was followed by the demur of, 'perhaps not *quite* clear;' till, at length, Lady S—— broke up the conclave, by approaching the once-more uneasy trio, and requesting Mr D. (who had been voted the most trust-worthy) to favour the meeting by reading and expounding a chapter. The servants entered, the circle was formed; when the lady next me informed me that herself and all her '*really* serious friends' were very curious to know how Mr D. would get over his exposition in presence of Mr B., as he was aware that the latter gentleman avowedly thought him not sound on the doctrine of 'assurance.' Well, then we had the usual touchstone of Calvinism, the eighth of Romans; some part of the exhortation, after the commentary, was very beautiful, the prayer still more so; but when all the good ladies arose from their knees, and, instead of retiring in silence and humility, collected, as was their custom, in little criticising knots, to discuss what had just been uttered, I hurried Katherine away, and have since declined every serious party."

"God help all these poor foolish women and their leaders, that they may not turn quite crazy," sighed Mr Everard, smiling while he sighed, "and so the end of all this was, that you resolved to become a Catholic."

"No! not 'resolved,'—but the 'middle path of truth,' as my uncle calls the *real* Church of England, was actually unknown to me, although I was regularly baptized and confirmed one of its members. Nor is this to be wondered at; for the evangelical body in that Church were those who guided me, and from them I learned to consider all forms as bondage, all *reliance* on the sacraments as superstition; and when I opened my eyes to the error of my guides, I thought, in my ignorance, that there was no alternative to be found from their endless vacillation, but in the immovability of Catholicity."

"Well, you were not wrong there, for the *real* Church of England, as you call her, ought to be as immovable as the Universal Church, of which she is essentially a part."

"Yes! I see this now, since my uncle's explanations; but I was then ignorant of the high claims of my Church above those of other Protestant communities."

“And now,” said Mr Everard, “if you follow my advice, you will not puzzle yourself any more with either controversy or history. I do not mean that you should not read, if you please, the several Church records which come in your way: but, if you expect to find, from Milner or Mosheim, that, in the first five centuries of the Church, Christians believed just the doctrines of the thirty-nine articles, and nothing more, you will be disappointed, and your mind again unhinged.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed Geraldine. “Do you mean that my uncle spoke in ignorance, when he led me to suppose that the doctrines of my Church were exactly those of the early Christians?”

“The Warden is ignorant of nothing,” replied Mr Everard, “and doubtless will explain to you, when he sees fit, the reason why the Church of England has, in some few respects, followed her own view of Scripture, instead of the example of the primitive Christians. In the mean time, your duty appears to me to be plainly this—remain in that community of Christians where Providence has placed you; and never think of leaving it on account of its short-comings, *until* you shall have acted up to all that it professes to enforce. This will be but justice to your Church, and proper respect to your uncle, who is deeply solicitous on your account. Believe me, that, if you really thus act up to all that your Church inculcates, you will be so nearly a Catholic, that, excepting the points of union with Rome, and the sacrament of Extreme Unction, you will be essentially a member of the Universal Church, and need contemplate no change.”

“I do not care for Rome, or the Pope,” returned Geraldine; “but I often wish to know what reason my Church can give for rejecting that sacrament of the dying, called by Catholics ‘Extreme Unction.’”

“Well now! will you be quiet, and trust your Church, as I bid you, at least for a time?” said Mr Everard. “Just simply obey her, and you will have enough to do.”

“For how long a time?” inquired she laughing; “till your scheme is ripe for the union of the Churches? Well! I will be obedient—*almost* as obedient as a Catholic, till I can see my way more clearly; for I own,” added she gravely, “that, at present, I am bewildered with having thought too much. I will now think no more, but pray—and act.”

From this time, Geraldine determined to love, to admire, to be satisfied with her Church and its ministers, to hope for a revival of its energies, and to labour indefatigably for the re-establishment of its ancient discipline. Having a perfect guide for practice as well as doctrine, in her Book of Common Prayer, she copied thence the table of vigils, feasts, fasts, and days of abstinence, to be observed in the year; and, in the innocence, or roguery, of her heart, determining to please her orthodox uncle, by strictly following the rules of the Church of England, both for him and for herself, she sent directions to the astonished cook, that no meat should be served on the following days,—namely, the eves or vigils before the Nativity of our Lord, the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, Easter Day, Ascension Day, Pentecost, St Matthias, St John Baptist, St Peter, St James, St Bartholomew, St Matthew, St Simon and St Jude, St Andrew, St Thomas, and All Saints! Also on the days of fasting or abstinence, namely—the Forty Days of Lent, the Ember Days at the four seasons, the Three Rogation Days, and all the Fridays in the year, except Christmas Day. Here were, indeed, fasts and abstinence enough! With respect to the feasts, there was no difficulty in either providing or consuming the “fat of the land:” but for spiritual food! alas! it was hopeless to expect any “good Protestant” to give up an hour’s labour or merchandise to praise God and honour him in his saints! Geraldine’s round of visits, with Mr Everard, to the clergy in the neighbourhood, entreating them to open their churches on the week days, to commemorate the apostles and the saints, only drew forth excuses from some, jokes and hearty laughter from the rector, Mr Thornhill, and a smile from even his zealous curate; although the latter qualified his smile by saying, that he should be glad of any opportunity to draw his flock together for public worship, and to hear a faithful exposition of God’s word, but not to commemorate any mere creature, while he also thought, that to have the Church service so often repeated would only produce weariness in the people.....“If,” added he, “I were allowed to use extempore prayer——”

“Extempore prayer!” cried the rector, “never let me hear that again, Sir! Extempore preaching, Sir, is as much as I can stand in my parish, and I have had too much of that already. But extempore prayer! God bless my soul!——”

"Indeed," replied the curate, "I much doubt if Paul and the Apostles would have authorized any other."

"Mr Brown, neither you nor I have any thing to do with the Apostles, and all that cant. Keep to your Church, Sir."

"I do keep to my Church, Mr Thornhill; and in her earlier and purer days, it was not orthodox to have a written sermon; I have therefore full liberty to preach extempore, though perhaps restricted in the prayers."

"And a very good thing that restriction, Mr Brown; let the people keep to the Church prayers."

"I too have often wished," said Geraldine, "beautiful as is our Liturgy, and adapted, as it is, in its several parts, to our different conditions of mind, that some occasional variety were permitted in the Church service, especially as it is so very long; and, in this reluctance to open the churches during the week, there may be some just apprehension that no one would attend, owing to the weariness produced by this constant repetition."

"No!" said Mr Everard, "this cannot be cause sufficient; for I have often watched Catholics on their knees for an hour together, with not a symptom of weariness either of mind or body, when the only change of prayer was, from the 'Our Father' to the 'Hail Mary,' and back again to the 'Our Father.'"

"Ah! poor creatures," said Mr Thornhill, shrugging his shoulders; while the curate rejoined, "Thank God! we are at any rate free from these vain repetitions."

"Take care, Sir," cried Mr Everard, "what it is you thank God for. Remember that He has taught us *but one prayer*, which is the very one you are pleased to thank Him you feel no inclination to repeat oftener than once or twice a day. Rest assured, Sir, that many a poor simple peasant has gone straight to heaven, who never framed any other form of words. Well?"

Mr Brown looked confused, and replied, "that he had not intended to attack more than the unmeaning repetition of what he perfectly acknowledged to be a model for all prayer; and that he had used the Scriptural expression, 'vain repetition,' principally with reference to the 'Ave Maria,' which he must not only consider a false worship, but which was also reprehensible from the simple fact of its repetition."

"Come, Sir! we will keep to the repetition, and leave the joint address of the Angel Gabriel and St Elizabeth for another time. Now suppose a poor creature with more heart than head.

kneeling down from sorrow, or gratitude, or joy, or what you please, and addressing his God. Well! he lifts up his heart, Sir, and if God hears no words at all, or hears nothing but the prayer He himself taught him, that hour's prayer is accepted—I'd stake my life upon it. What! does God require in his plenitude and all-sufficiency the tinklings and turnings of our petty eloquence! I trow not."

"Still, Mr Everard, the words of Christ are plainly these, 'Use not vain repetitions, as the Heathens do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.'"

"Well, Sir! I am defending repetition when the heart is full, for this is nature. I am not defending repetition when the heart is empty, for this is hypocrisy, and is the 'much speaking,' and the no feeling, which our Divine Teacher reprehends. But now, to the subject of our visit to our good friend the Rector, namely, the having an early service in both the parish church and chapel of ease. at seven or eight o'clock, for the people, before they go forth to their day's work. Suppose we fix on the Psalms and Lessons for the day, with the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, Creed and Lord's Prayer, which would occupy between twenty minutes and half an hour. What say you to granting this, Mr Thornhill?"

"Upon my word, Everard, you get on so fast," said the Rector, taking breath, "you leave one no time to ponder. These things require time, and, above all, the consent of the bishop. In these times, any innovation—"

"*Innovation!* my good Sir; *revival* you mean, in correct language. There was a time in England, when every mechanic, and every peasant, before he went to his daily labour, knelt before the altar of his God. A daily service is as orthodox as your bands and shovel hat, and you require no leave from the bishop to unlock the church door, and do your duty."

"And pray who would come?" replied the Rector, good humouredly laughing at the old gentleman's warmth; "I should most assuredly have to address solely my clerk, and, like Dean Swift, begin—'Dearly beloved Roger!' No, no! my honest quixotic friend, leave the poor people to kneel by their own bed's side, and then go quietly out to their daily work, till Sunday, when they can have praying enough, and, God knows, preaching more than enough."

"Well, Thornhill, I will not hurry you; send me your answer

this day week. But, remember, it is an awful thing to assist, by one's own negligence, in the downfall of one's Church; and that the Church of England is tottering no one can deny."

At this instant, Mrs Thornhill entered the Rector's study, full of amazement that Miss Carrington had not been ushered into the drawingroom; and the explanations and compliments between the ladies ended in a visit to the green house, and a walk round the grounds—Geraldine little suspecting, at that time, the fact, that, through the incaution of poor Goodwin's confessor, this lady, whom she had equally dreaded and despised as the greatest newsmonger in the neighbourhood, was in possession of a secret of General Carrington's, hitherto withheld from even his own child, and which he had thought to have carried safely to the grave. As soon, however, as she could escape from conversation, or rather "talk," which ever wearied her, Geraldine took leave, and feeling more depressed than she could well account for, was lifted on her horse in silence, and could only bow her acknowledgments to the group at the house door, for their eulogiums on her favourite Finella, as she turned with her friend, Mr Everard, into the winding and shady lane that led from the rectory of Lowbridge to the high lands of Elverton. The riders continued for some minutes in silence, till at length the old gentleman, turning towards his abstracted companion, exclaimed, "Well, Miss Carrington, I have vowed to do your bidding, and, like a true knight, I shrink not. What parson shall I run a tilt with next?—What, in tears! Ah! you will never do for a Church reviver, with so faint a heart. What say you to calling at the vicarage, and engaging your pious relative to give us the 'wicked man turning away from his wickedness,' every day in the week? Well!"

Geraldine stopped her horse, as if with the intention of following this advice, and gazed with her companion on the distant view of the picturesque hamlet and parsonage-house of the valley. "No!" exclaimed she, at length moving onward, "it will be useless to urge my poor uncle Edmund to more labours; they have already injured his health. Were he to open his Church once, he must do it always; to which he could not pledge himself. You know this was the objection given us by Mr Oakley in the town, on whom we first called."

"True!" cried Mr Everard, and then uttering his usual challenge of "Well!" took out his tablets, and began to note

down, "English Establishment, in the parishes of Elverton and Lowbridge, declines to open her churches on the week days. First reason—afraid of doing what is right once, for fear of doing right always. Second—tired of 'the wicked man constantly turning away from his wickedness.' Third—I have no third. What did that feaster, and no faster, Thornhill say? Did he give any reason why the spider only should lay up store during the week in Blowbridge Church?"

"No!" replied Geraldine, "but you hurried him—perhaps he may be prevailed upon to have one service during the week, and that will be something gained. I am sorry that you threw the whole blame of our visit on me, who merely wished to be your second; for the poor Rector has been so tormented by requests from ladies, respecting his religious opinions and duties, that he could not help complaining of them, and—" Geraldine stopped.

"Yes! yes! I heard the end," said Mr Everard; "the Rector said that he had only admitted Miss Carrington, because she was too young, too pretty, and too well bred, to give him any alarm respecting religious advice. Poor Thornhill! he little thought, when we cantered up his glebe land, what machinations were in store for him. 'Et tu, Brute!'"

"The bishop! the bishop!" suddenly exclaimed Geraldine, "let us go to the bishop. He can command all these timid men to do their duty."

"Better ask *Mrs* Bishop," said Mr Everard drily.

"No, but seriously, Mr Everard, what would be the result of an application to the bishop? You are very intimate at the palace.

"I am; and, therefore, can the better assure Miss Carrington that our Right Reverend Father in God would beg of her not to make herself ridiculous."

"Mr Everard," said Geraldine warmly, "you are quite aware that I do not intend to put myself forward in the matter; and that I was your companion, not you mine, this morning. Tell me whether your friendship and influence with the bishop would not engage him to revive the ancient discipline of the Church?"

"No!" said Mr Everard, "the bishop would propose nothing to his clergy, I am quite convinced; but, at the same time, I think he would co-operate, were they to come forward. He is cautious, but a good man; and, had he not a worldly wife,

and fashionable daughters, would have been an ornament to the Church. I have my plans, and my hopes, and, in the mean time, you must be satisfied to keep the festivals appointed by your Church in your own house, forming what congregation you can; only remember that the number must not exceed twenty-one."

"What am I to do after the departure of my uncle?" said Geraldine, after a long pause in the conversation. "I have often so much wished for a domestic chaplain, such as are only now to be found in the palaces of the bishops; and, when the office of tutor is joined to that of chaplain, in the families of our principal nobility. Surely, my father, who is so indulgent to me in every thing, would never refuse to myself and household this privilege."

"Humph!" said the old gentleman, "I think prudence would suggest your selecting some man advanced in life, or the chaplain might perhaps become too interesting to the almost solitary heiress of Elverton Hall."

"Not in the least," said Geraldine, "for on that point I am completely a Catholic. I wish most fervently that our clergy were without either wives or families, as they are in that Church. I have become quite out of heart with the wives of our clergy; for they seem to me more frivolous, more worldly, than many who have married men of the world. Perhaps I set too high a standard for these ladies. I wish them to be a set of 'Sisters of Charity,' and, by comparing them constantly with those devoted women, I become too exacting."

"And pray what do you know of 'Sisters of Charity?'" said Mr Everard.

"I know," replied Geraldine, "of the indefatigable labours of that community, as all those do who have visited the public institutions in Paris and Dublin for the relief of the sick and destitute; and I know that, at this moment, while we are congratulating ourselves on the prevalence of this south-westerly wind, which blows from us to the infected town, four of these 'Sisters' are in the hospital in Elverton, under the guidance and protection of Mr Bernard, braving not only the fearful malady itself, but every fatigue and hardship that can offer violence to the natural feelings. Why are our clergymen's wives not like these?"

"Well! perhaps they would be as devoted," returned he, "but for the little Johnnies and Tommies at home."

"Exactly so," cried Geraldine; "but the evil would scarcely be one, even if the wife not only begun but ended her charity at home, provided (and the Vicarage crossed her mind) that she did not hang like a mill-stone round her husband's neck, and prevent his devoted usefulness to his flock. Mr Everard, I know many good wives, but I know few good wives for our clergy."

"Then some day," said he, "I will introduce you to one, in this very neighbourhood; but one so unobtrusive, so retiring, that she has escaped your knowledge. She will form a valuable addition to your small list of good helpmates for the priesthood." As Mr Everard made this promise, they entered the last gate in the park, and the sound of the bell for the evening toilet, which faintly reached them, made them give their horses free rein till they reached the steps of the hall.

CHAPTER XI.

"Blessed is that simplicity which leaveth the difficult ways of disputes, and goeth on in the plain and sure path of God's commandments."

Thomas à Kempis.

"BLANDFORD," whispered the Warden to his 'own man,' who stood at his usual post behind his master's chair at the dinner table, "inquire what the joint is, and when it is to appear; I do not understand the plan of the dinner to-day." A smile passed over the face of the butler, when summoned by the decorously grave valet to reply to the Warden's inquiry; but the sense of his own official position in approaching a brother dignitary, repressed in the head of the sideboard all undue sense of the ridiculous, as he informed the astonished Doctor of Divinity, that Miss Carrington had expressly ordered that no joint or meat of any kind should be served up on the "*Hamper Days*!"

"Ah! what—really—oh! of course—very proper," said the Warden, with admirable presence of mind. "Everard! a glass of wine?"

"Willingly, Warden. On the strength of the '*Hamper Days*?' Well!"

"The '*Ember Days*,'" said Geraldine, much embarrassed by the sudden college look of her uncle, and the struggling mirth which played in the countenance of Mr Everard and Miss Graham. "The *Ember Days* begin on this, the twenty-first

of September, and used always to be kept as days of abstinence in the Church of England."

"Why so? what was there either sinful or mournful about the Ember Days?" cried Katherine Graham, "was it then that St Anthony preached to the fish, that we have nothing else at table!"

"Come! come," said Dr Sinclair, rousing himself, "there is plenty to eat, and a very good thing would it be, in a medical point of view, for the over-fed portion of society to keep what the Anglo-Indians term a 'banyan day,' once or twice a week. We all eat too much, according to Cornaro."

"Oh!" rejoined Miss Graham, "I am sure that we can all do very well with less food, if necessary. I would often most willingly omit my dinner altogether, when I have taken no exercise. But it is the hope of propitiating God by fish and eggs, as holy food, that strikes me as so absurd. I would live on them entirely to do good to my fellow sinners; for instance, I would eat this insipid whiting every day, to ensure a good meat dinner to some poor exhausted creature; but for the salvation of my own soul! and to be, at the same time, seen of men! Why, I can only quote—

‘The devil must grin;
For his favourite sin
Is pride that apes humility.’”

The servants all tittered, and the colour rose painfully to Geraldine's cheeks, though, by great effort, she preserved silence, and endeavoured to forgive—not Katherine, for from her she had never expected support, but her uncle, who had given her false encouragement, by his theoretic adherence to what he shrunk from avowing practically. In his study, and amidst the fasting "Fathers of the English Church," Dr Sinclair fasted retrospectively, and was at peace. Great then was his embarrassment at being called upon to patronize the actual abstinence laid down so unmercifully in the Book of Common Prayer, and begun in all the simplicity of obedience by his niece; especially as he was aware of being too learned and noted a person in the Church not to have aroused enemies, who had already impeded his career of usefulness, by misrepresentations of the Popish twist of the learned Warden of——.

"Geraldine," said he at length, "you remember, in the twentieth article of the Church, that 'she hath power to decree

rites and ceremonies,' and therefore it may happen, that in her wisdom she may see fit to alter or abridge certain of them, for the greater edification of its members. Now, although 'fasting' is warranted by the highest example and precept in Scripture, namely, that of Christ, and also of the Apostles, and therefore may be justly reckoned an article of Christian obligation, rather than a rite or ceremony, yet the appointment of certain days for the observance of this duty is a matter of Church discipline, which may be, and has been, altered at various times, all which I will explain to you at some future period. In the interim," added he, "I believe you need not make us keep any more of the 'Ember Days,' although I greatly applaud your zeal for desiring to act strictly according to the supposed commands of your Church."

Geraldine, pleased that her uncle had spoken on the subject, and had even praised her, readily gave up the Ember fast, in the full expectation that the alteration of the appointed days would be soon pointed out to her; and she now listened with recovered spirits to the learned conversation which took place throughout the rest of the repast, between the Warden and Mr Everard, on Jewish, Mahomedan, and Pagan fasts. Thence they went off to the Brahmins, till the departure of the servants, who having at length placed the dessert on the table, finally left the room, completely mystified on the subject of fasting, and with but one clear persuasion, namely, that of the vast learning and power over 'dictionary words,' possessed by the reverend Warden and his friend. When freed from these attendants, Dr Sinclair again addressed his niece, and prefacing what he had to say, by his conviction that he spoke before confidential friends, bade Geraldine recall to mind the outcry raised in his University, and the strong party formed against him, even in his own College, at the time of Catholic Emancipation, on the absurd notion that he secretly favoured Popery.—"What another man might fearlessly do, I dare not," added he, "at any rate, till other men are wise, or I beyond their reach. Placed, as I am, in a high official position, surrounded by spies and enemies, and already suspected by Government, I can venture nothing that would confirm these suspicions: and I would scorn to do that in private which I could not do publicly. Therefore, Geraldine, until I can boldly keep the fasts and abstinence days in the commemoration room of ——— College, I cannot in propriety keep them here. Besides,

in these charges in the household, you would do well to await the General's return. I am but a guest, and as the whole responsibility of any matter of this kind would rest on me, instead of on you, I feel averse to what would doubtless appear impertinent and intrusive to the master of the house, on his return."

Geraldine was silent; she scarcely knew what she thought, and therefore could not reply. She was quite aware of the persecution against her uncle, at the time of the emancipation of the long restricted Catholics. She was also aware that Dr Sinclair's early friends, who were now in power, had listened to his enemies, and withheld from him the long-expected bishopric. But for this storm, he would doubtless have given her his aid; as it was, he plainly refused it, and she must submit. She would wait till he had left her, as soon he must, to return to his college duties: and now making the signal to her friend, Miss Graham, she arose, and the ladies retired together. "Keep up your spirits, my dear Geraldine," said Katherine, laughing, as they mounted the stairs arm in arm. "Wait for the General's return; for, mad as he becomes when Popery stalks abroad, yet I am sure he will consent to your eating what food you like, if you are but discreet enough to give some wiser motive than your soul's salvation. You know how seldom he touches meat himself, so fond is he of the river fish: why, then, cannot you have a sudden taste for these muddy creatures, and continue to avoid the criminal food of land animals? Oh! Geraldine," suddenly cried she more gravely, "how can you degrade the Christian's glorious liberty by such weak scruples? Does not Christ expressly say that it is not what goeth into the mouth that defileth? and this keeping of particular days, is it not plainly rebuked by the Apostle?"

"As for the particular days rebuked by St Paul," replied Geraldine, "they were Jewish commemorations, not Christian; and I see plainly the advantage and comfort of established days, that all things may be done decently and in order, 'no undue fasting with some, and convenient forgetfulness with others, and that the communion of feeling and of duty may be kept up between the members of a Church, by all uniting, at the same time, in the same penitential following of Christ; for you cannot deny, Katherine, that He did give us the example of fasting."

"I think that He bore *all* our griefs, and carried *all* our

sorrows," replied Katherine, with her usual promptitude of quotation.

"And are we then to do nothing for Him?" said Geraldine, the tears starting to her eyes as she remembered the rest of that touching prophecy from Isaiah.

"Yes! you can do all those works of mercy which He says that He will receive as if done unto himself," replied Katherine, "but do not fetter the Christian Dispensation, by retaining the bondage of the Jewish Law."

"Not except where He commands it, certainly," said Geraldine: "but I think He does command us to fast;"—and, as she said this, Geraldine, instead of following her friend into her boudoir, which continued to be the favourite evening resort of the little party at the Hall, passed on to a light reading closet, which she had lately thought of fitting up as an oratory, and, opening her Bible at the Gospel of St Matthew, determined to search regularly throughout the New Testament, and to note down every thing relating to fasting that should occur in its sacred pages. "I am tired of mere theory," she mentally exclaimed, "and of those admissions made in learned seclusion, which are not to be acted upon because of such and such doctrine of expediency. I am accused of rushing into every thing I have once admitted to be right: but is this blamable? Surely not! I cannot help acting on my convictions, for by these shall I be judged at the last day!" She then turned to the shelves, containing her books of devotion, and having only the day before arranged and classed them, was then, for the first time, aware of the number of *commentaries* on Scripture, and *aids* to Bible reading, which she had gradually collected during the past four years, to assist her judgment in reading the Holy Scriptures; and as she continued to gaze on these prettily bound little keepsakes from her Evangelical friends, she was struck with the inconsistency of their having so eagerly sent them to her at various times, when their boasted privilege had ever been the exercise of each one's private judgment, *without aid or comment*, on "the Bible, the whole Bible, and *nothing but* the Bible." "How few there are," thought she, "who really know what they believe. Sir Eustace de Grey gives a not inappropriate title to Protestants, when he calls them 'the Children of the Mist:' and alas! alas! how sad is it that the Church, which commands my respect from the decision and im-

mutability with which her members believe, and act on their belief, yet teaches so much more than is warranted by the word of God." But suddenly checking herself: "What have I to do with either Evangelical or Roman Catholic community? I am a member of the real old Church of England—a Church most beautiful and pure, and in whose bosom I have promised to remain, in common gratitude and respect, until at least I shall have fulfilled all her commands, in spite of the cowardice of her long pampered children. And therefore, I now search for Scriptural warrant for fasting, more for Katherine than for myself: for if I acknowledge the authority of a Church to teach the Christian verities to the ignorant, and believe that the Holy Ghost directs her decisions, I must, in common sense, admit her interpretation of holy writ; and my uncle has to-day again repeated that 'fasting is an article of Christian *obligation* in the Church of England.'" Having thus finished her little soliloquy, Geraldine took down "Chalmers' Scripture Reference," to serve as a concordance for quickly discovering all the texts which bore upon fasting; but in vain did she look in that otherwise useful little book for a word not admitted into the creed of the author; so she ended where she should have begun, with her little "Brown's Concordance," and speedily collected the following texts, for the purpose of convincing, or at least of silencing the objections of, Katherine Graham:—

First, noting the warning against hypocritical fasting, given by our Lord in *St Matt.* vi. 16, which seems to be the only part of the injunction remembered by Protestants, Geraldine wrote down, "but *when thou fastest*, anoint thy head, and wash thy face, that thou seem not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which seeth in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly." "Can anything be plainer than this command, and this promise?" thought she, and then copied from the same gospel, (chap. ix.) the reason given by Christ why his disciples did not fast, which was, because their light and their joy was still with them. "But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast."

The cure of the lunatic, which could not be effected but through prayer and *fasting*, next followed, from *Matt.* xvii. 21, and then from *Acts* i. when the prophets and teachers at Antioch "ministered to the Lord, and *fasted*, the Holy Ghost thus commanded

'Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.' Then *fasted* they and prayed, and laid their hands on them, and let them go." Also at the ordination of the elders. "when they (Paul and Barnabas) had prayed and *fasted*, they commended them to the Lord in whom they believed."

Geraldine then remarked and noted down the "fasting often" of the great Apostle, and thought that Katherine must admit that he, at least, came within our power of imitation, though Christ, being God, was beyond it; and that, if Paul, a vessel of election, saw that he ought to suffer with Christ after his example, so ought we; for, although we may again escape from the responsibility of our blessed Saviour's example, by considering Him to have suffered everything for us, yet, this cannot hold good with St Paul and the other Apostles. "I shall not await my father's return," cried Geraldine mentally, to obey the plain words of Scripture, and the commands of my Church; but I will so far obey my uncle also, as not to compel others to this duty at present." And, comforted with having come to some determination on this subject, she folded up her little paper of texts, to slip into Miss Graham's workbox, and returned with a cheerful countenance to the boudoir, where she found the Warden and Miss Graham engaged at backgammon and Mr Everard leaning back on the sofa in a fit of abstraction, his yet untasted coffee in his hand. He was roused, however, by Geraldine's approach; and making room for her by him, "Allow me," whispered he, "to congratulate you on the very successful attempts you have hitherto made to revive the zeal and fervour of your Church!"

"Ah, Mr Everard," replied she, endeavouring to respond to the raillery of his tone, "you are but a poor comforter, if not a malicious sprite, leading me through bog and briar, but to laugh at me!"

"Not a bit," returned he: "I laughed to comfort myself. I have often been driven to that soothing self-deception through life; but," added he more gravely, "I do not see any cause for melancholy; only we must have patience, and wait the course of events; and the gradual reaction of the public mind, from the delusion of supposed private judgment, and dread of authority, to a general demand for the certainty and repose of Church decisions."

That night, as Geraldine was seated at her toilet, and preparing, as usual, to read aloud some book of devotional instruction to her attendant, she was arrested by so unmerciful a pull of her

entangled tresses, that, uttering a scream, she started up, and, turning, beheld Mrs Kelsoe, with her eyes blinded by tears, standing in that rigid uprightness of position, which her young mistress well knew foreboded a storm. Gently disengaging herself, Geraldine inquired, with her usual kind manner, into the cause of such apparent distress: but fresh tears being the only reply she could obtain, she turned once more to her book: when provoked to utterance, Mrs Kelsoe exclaimed, "And is it come to this! ah! the poor dear General!"

"Good heavens," cried Geraldine; "then you know something of my father! something calamitous. Ah! Kelsoe, speak quickly I entreat—I command you—conceal nothing from me; I can always bear the truth."

"God grant you may, Miss Carrington; but many say this, who can but ill bear the truth when it does come. However, to come to the point, for anything I know to the contrary, the honoured General is in the best possible health."

"Oh! blessed be God!" cried Geraldine, taking a deep breath, "proceed then, Kelsoe, with what you have to say!"

"I have to say this, ma'am, that I have known the General, off and on, these thirty years, and I know his sentiments pretty well, and whom he likes and dislikes, and what he likes and dislikes, and the families in the county he keeps off from, and the religion he keeps off from. And I know that the De Grey family is one, and that Popery is one; and here's the truth, Miss Carrington; and if you are drawn into these two things, it's all over with the General—the best of men, the kindest, the calmest—but if once properly worked up!—oh my powers! the great Dragon of Wantley would be nothing to him."

Here Geraldine leaned her head on her toilet, and, by its tremulous movement, seemed to weep; but great was Mrs Kelsoe's mortification and wrath when it proved to be continued and irrepressible laughter.

"Ah! very well, ma'am, I am glad you can be so merry about it; and, indeed, you had better laugh while you can, for it will not last long."

"Very probably not, Kelsoe," at length replied her mistress, gradually recovering from the comparison which had so much amused her. "I doubt not but that you are a true prophetess of ills to come. But what has excited all these fears of Popery and of a family I scarcely ever see?"

"Ah! ma'am, why, the very lowest of the servants is aware of your now meaning to keep the Popish feasts and fasts, and to make us all keep them, if we wish to be in favour; and they have it, Miss Carrington, that all this change is to be dated from the morning that Squire Everard contrived a meeting between you and Sir Eustace de Grey, up at the abbey ruins, where the grooms say they had to wait more than two hours."

"And is it possible," said Geraldine proudly, "that grooms and scullions *dare* to intrude their ignorant curiosity on subjects far above them, and that you, Kelsoe, can so forget yourself as to repeat all this to me? With respect to what you and the rest of the household call 'Popish fasts,' I follow the example and commands, first, of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, next, of the Apostles and early Christians, and lastly, of the orthodox Church of England. Those who in future venture to disobey such authority as this, must do so on their own responsibility. I force no one, but still must warn the servants that they had better reflect, not on their mistress's motives, but on the state of their own souls, and on the account they will have to give of listening to their own pampered inclinations, instead of the self-denial and mortification practised by the early Church. As for yourself, Kelsoe, I value and love you too much, not to treat you as a friend; and, therefore, will set your mind at ease, respecting any member of the De Grey family, whom mere accident may cause me to meet; but any suppositions relating to my highly esteemed friend, Mr Everard, I should regard as impertinences, undeserving a reply, and I request that I may never hear them again."

"Indeed, Miss Carrington, I beg pardon. I believe whatever you tell me, for you have from a child spoken the truth. I shall immediately put a stop to all the talk below."

"Stay, Kelsoe. I wish you certainly to silence these idle babblings; but, when you do so, remember *to* whom you speak, and *of* whom you speak," said the naturally haughty heiress: "and now good night, and leave me; I want nothing more."

"Well, but ma'am," said Mrs Kelsoe, still lingering, "you know, if you please, that we are in duty bound to consult the minister of this parish of Elverton Manor, our own Mr Edmund, about fasting, or—what is the other name for it?"

"Abstinence," replied Geraldine; "but they do not, I believe, mean the same thing. Abstinence is, I think, the renouncement

of the more nourishing and luxurious food for harder fare, without restriction of quantity ; while, on the fasting days, one meal only of that harder fare is eaten."

"No bad thing occasionally, ma'am, for the butler and coachman," simpered Mrs Kelsoe ; "but, if you please, we'll consult Mr Edmund, because, as the Warden's own gentleman, Mr Blandford, says, there are prodigious remains of Popery in the Prayer Book, which he supposes it was all very right not to meddle with in former days, when it would not have been politic to hurry the public mind ; but la ! Miss Carrington, it's amazing the opening of people's minds, in these days. They will read and judge for themselves, and I doubt (as Mr Blandford says) if they will consent to 'walk backwards.'"

"If they have wandered from the right path, they must retrace their steps," replied Geraldine ; and they will find the reward of their humility and docility in the peace of mind they will enjoy. But you are very right, Kelsoe, in wishing to refer to our duly appointed pastor, and it shall be done as soon as possible."

Mrs Kelsoe now withdrew for the night ; and Geraldine, immediately seeking her writing materials, wrote the following note to the Reverend Edmund Sinclair :—

"My dear Uncle,

"The interdict still continuing on any communication between our dwellings, I am compelled to write, instead of conversing with you, on a subject which at present disturbs my mind, namely, the duty of 'fasting,' as commanded by our Church, on the authority of Christ's precepts and example, and of the practice of the Apostles and primitive Christians. Myself and household apply to you, in preference to the Warden, first, because you are our appointed minister, and next, because he has been so much misunderstood and misrepresented, on the subject of 'Popery,' that he would rather not at present be the one to establish, in this house, a custom, held by Catholics alone as an essential duty. And why is this ? Why do they alone simply and unhesitatingly follow Scripture in this respect ? Are we not allowing them an undue advantage over our purer faith ?

Most truly your affectionate niece,

GERALDINE CARRINGTON."

On the evening of the following day our heroine received Mr Sinclair's reply :—

“ Dear Geraldine,

“ Beware of suffering the calm faith of your regenerated state to be disturbed by suggestions that can come only from the evil one. What are our poor, defiled, and wholly corrupt works, but filthy rags in the sight of an all pure God? Why trust to them, instead of to that perfect victim, ever ready to answer for us, having fulfilled all righteousness in that one sacrifice of himself once offered? It is true that he fasted—a fast of great mystery—and do you too fast, but let it be a fast of the spirit, a fast from sin, a fast such as is described in *Isaiah* lviii. 6, 7, 8. Many things are to be found in the Book of Common Prayer, which were excusable at a period when the minds of men, just issuing from the darkness of Popery, dazzled by the radiant light of faith alone, and too weak to bear this pure doctrine, were still crying out, ‘ what good shall I do !’ But, dear friend, *we* have not so learned Christ, that, after we have ‘ begun in the spirit, we would now be made perfect in the flesh.’ Let me conclude, by exhorting you, as Paul did the Galatians, ‘ to stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.’ ”

Geraldine slowly and sadly folded up this note, musing on the infatuation, which had led the most pious and devoted followers of the *new* Church of England to find difficulties in the simple commands and example of Christ, and to seek for their explanation in abstruse passages of St Paul. She was at first tempted to conceal the contents of the paper from Mrs Kelsoe ; but her love of truth prevailed ; and on the Abigail’s eager inquiries, when she attended her lady’s toilet, Geraldine replied, “ That Mr Sinclair did not see the necessity of mortifying the body, though he had written beautifully on the spiritual discipline, requisite for those who aspired to conformity with Christ.”

“ Exactly my opinions, ma’am,” exclaimed the delighted Mrs Kelsoe, who loved to expatiate, over a hot meat supper every night, on the utter nothingness of man’s works ; “ that is what I always say, ‘ By faith alone shall ye be saved, and not by works, lest any man should boast.’ ”

“ People must also take care,” replied Geraldine, “ not to boast of their sins of omission.”

“ La, ma’am ! why, surely you would not differ from St. Paul ? ”

“ No! Kelsoe, far from it; I agree, and glory in agreeing, with the great Apostle; and, instead of taking from his writings isolated texts, I endeavour to study the whole—I compare one part with another, and I am thus enabled to observe, that the seeming contradiction occasionally exhibited of his sentiments, is to be explained by the different abuses against which he had to combat. Hence, while the one text you have just quoted is all you think necessary to remember, I retain his having also spoken of his ‘fastings often,’ and of his keeping his body under, and bringing it into subjection.’ ”

“ Well, Miss Carrington, I have the greatest admiration for your goodness and learning; indeed, ma’am, I have. No one can know and love your piety more than I do: but still you see, ma’am, if you and our minister differ in opinion, what is to be done? You yourself always say that we must ‘humbly and simply follow the direction of our duly appointed minister,’—these are your very words.”

“ Very true,” at length replied Geraldine, in a sad and abstracted manner; and then, after another pause she added, “ I think, Kelsoe, that I shall endeavour to have some farther conversation with both my uncles on this subject, and, in the mean time, until we receive their positive commands, we shall do well each to act according to the dictates of her conscience. You, therefore, will make no distinction, of course, between Friday and the other days of the week; but, as I perceive that my Church has set apart the day on which Christ died, for the penitential commemoration of his sufferings, I shall henceforth abstain from animal food, and great delicacies, and, if possible, will sing only sacred music on that sad but holy day.”

CHAPTER XII.

Fierce to her foes, yet fears her force to try,
Because she wants innate authority;
For how can she constrain them to obey,
Who has herself cast off the lawful sway.

Dryden.

On the following evening, Miss Graham, after amusing herself for some time at the piano, closed the instrument, and approached the oriel window, in which the little party generally sat, curious to know why old Mr. Everard had been so unmoved by

his usual favourite airs of 'Awa' Whigs awa,' and 'Lochaber no more.' "What can be engaging you so deeply?" cried she, "that you require neither chess nor music this evening, and that you have never once moved nor spoken, since you brought up from the library that wise-looking old book, which, from its appearance deserves to have been written by a Covenanter?"

"Your random shot is not amiss," returned he; "for, although not written by a Covenanter, this book treats of that body of mistaken men; and I have just fallen on a part, which, if I interrupt no one, I wish to read aloud, as it bears strongly upon the subject lately discussed by high and low Church. Here, Geraldine, is a specimen of what you call the *real* Church of England, in the death-bed repentance of Speaker Lenthal, after the murder of the king, Charles I, as related by a dignitary of that Church.

"When I came into his (Speaker Lenthal's) presence, he told me he was very glad to see me, for he had two great works to do, and I must assist him in both, to fit his body for the earth, and his soul for heaven! to which purpose he desired me to pray with him. I told him the Church had appointed an office at the visitation of the sick, and I must use that. He said, 'Yes, he chiefly desired the prayers of the Church,' wherein he joined with great fervency and devotion. After prayers, he desired absolution: I told him I was very ready and willing to pronounce it, but he must first come to a Christian confession, and contrition for the sins and failings of his life. 'Well, sir,' said he, 'then instruct me to my duty.' I desired him to examine his life by the Ten Commandments; and wherein he found his failings, to fly to the gospel for mercy.* * * After the confession, he said he died a dutiful son of the Church of England, as it was established before these times; for he had not yet seen the alteration of the Liturgy. After this office, wherein he showed himself a very hearty penitent, he again desired the absolution of the Church, which I then pronounced, and which he received with much content and satisfaction; 'For,' says he, 'now indeed do I find the joy and benefit of that office, which Christ hath left in his Church.' Then, praying for the king, that he might long and happily live over us, and for the peace of the Church, he again desired prayers. The next day he received the Sacrament, and, after that work, I desired him to express himself to Dr Dickenson concerning the King's death, because he had only

done it to me in confession ; which he did, to the same effect as he had done to me. The rest of his time was spent in devotion and penitential meditations to the last.' ”

“ Here, you will observe, Geraldine,” added Mr Everard, as he closed the old book, “ the sense entertained by the minister, of the sacredness of disclosures made in sacramental confession ; so that not one word of the interesting and important account of the king’s death could he venture to repeat, unless the penitent himself gave it over again beyond confession. Observe also the faith of the dying man in the spiritual power given by Christ to his Church. Now, this is, or rather was, the true Church of England—alas, how fallen ! ”

“ Well, Miss Graham, what say you to this account ? ”

“ Why this,” replied Katherine :—“ you all know my opinion respecting the often discussed subject of confession and absolution, between two fellow sinners ; therefore I need say no more on the subject. But what principally strikes me in this account is, that Speaker Lenthall dies a dutiful son of a Church differing from what it was when the book was written ; for the narrator says,—‘ He had not seen the alteration of the Liturgy.’ Now a simple Bible Christian would not be staggered at this vacillation in the counsel and work of man ; but you, who believe, or try to believe, in a divinely-appointed set of rules, how do you get over this ? ”

“ The alteration spoken of was, probably, only that of giving more clearness and precision to the Church service ; a more perfect form of sound words,” said Mr Everard.

“ No ! no ! my good Sir,” returned Katherine, “ even *I* know better than that ; so you need not talk of ‘ probably,’ for those vague words suit neither your accurate learning, nor my positive temper. I am quite aware that the alterations in the English Liturgy were those of faith ;—for instance, in that most important point, of the Real Presence in the Sacrament, you know very well, that the first Communion service of the Church of England, as drawn up in 1552, by Cranmer, Ridley, and other of your bishops, whom the Warden calls the ‘ venerated Fathers of the English Church,’ clearly expresses, that ‘ the whole body of Christ is received under each particle of the Sacrament.’ Afterwards, when Calvinistic truth partly prevailed, and the Twenty-nine Articles of Religion, drawn up by the same prelates, were published in 1552, the Real Presence is there ex-

pressly *denied*, and the impossibility of that belief explained by the circumstance of Christ's Ascension in His glorified body to heaven. The Liturgy was then changed, that Liturgy which the Warden tells Geraldine she may safely trust to, as being a perfect commentary on Scripture, and a true exposition of the faith once delivered to the saints ! Ten years after this, Queen Elizabeth being on the throne, and inheriting an inclination for the former belief, the passage in the book of Common Prayer, which declares against the real and corporeal presence in the Sacrament, was expunged, and the words left in their original popish state. During the next hundred years so they remained, until, at the Restoration, which seems to be the time of your narrative, Mr Everard, amongst many alterations which then took place, the Rubric against the Real Presence and adoration of the Sacrament, was again restored as it stands at present."

"Well, Miss Graham, I can say nothing to contradict you in this account : I can only give you due credit for your accuracy, and wonder how you came by all this knowledge ?"

"Why, Mr Everard, the fact is, that, although I was brought up in a sort of confused manner, with respect to religion ; and supposed that, because I could say the English catechism by heart, and never went to any place of worship but the Episcopal Church, I was therefore a true Church of England woman ; yet, at eighteen, I went to Scotland, just six years ago, and found, amongst my Scotch relations, knowledge as well as piety ; and from them I learned what I have just repeated to you. My cousin, Kenneth Fergusson, and his sister Margaret, both enthusiasts for their purer faith, led me to the ' martyrs' graves,' to them a hallowed spot, to me one of humiliation ; for there had English bayonets slaughtered Scotch reformers, because, when they cast off the yoke of Rome, they did the work effectually, (retaining none of those things which their own divines considered antisciptural) and without consulting England. Margaret had paid a visit to London ; and to listen to her simple, yet sarcastic, account of the complicated and grand ceremonials she had witnessed, you would have supposed her to be describing Popish Rome, instead of Protestant London. Why did English ministers wear a white dress in the reading-desk, and a black one in the pulpit ? and walk in and out of a little room, in that mysterious manner, just to change their dress ? Why did they stand so little raised above the people, when

reading God's words, and be mounted up so high to read their own words? Why did the English Church people kneel round an altar to the bread and wine, if they did not worship them? Why did they never seem to know what they did, or did not believe,' &c. But Kenneth was the most resolute and constant champion of the Kirk, and critic of the English church service, of which he had an historical knowledge far beyond my own. Kenneth could give the date, and relate the circumstances attending every part, retained from, or substituted for, the Roman Catholic Mass, Vespers, and Litanies. All Henry's, young Edward's, and Elizabeth's changes of faith for the good people of England, excited his sarcastic vein of humour, and roused my spirit of inquiry. He had no patience with the remnants of popery in the Church of England; and by his pointing out to me the hollowness, the falsehood, of retaining certain doctrines in the letter, which were denied in the spirit—and this for the purpose of conciliating the people—he drew the key-stone from the arch, which I had taken for granted was unassailable, and to stand for ever."

"The sister lands have each a humour of their own, and proved it in nothing more than in their mode of protesting against the Roman Hierarchy," observed Mr Everard.

"But it has always struck me," said Geraldine, "as out of keeping with the usually calm and cautious Scotch, to dash everything to the ground at once. I should have expected this impetuosity more from the English mob."

"And from the 'mob' in England you would have found it," replied Mr Everard, "had *they* originated the Reformation. But here was the difference between the two countries. In England, the people received their faith from their rulers and pastors, and the change was comparatively temperate and gradual——"

"And attempered by a pleasing variety," interrupted Katherine, laughing, "as these rulers and pastors, under succeeding sovereigns, changed their faith four times. Few of them, comparatively speaking, choosing to leave their benefices, instead of their opinions. Worthy brethren of the 'Vicar of Bray!'"

"Miss Graham," said the Warden, at length roused to lay down his book, "these light assertions are not borne out by historical evidence. The Church of England has had, it is true, to mourn over faithless sons; but when more instructed on the

subject, you will find that, even in the trying circumstance of hereditary popish succession, her confessors and martyrs were *not* few!"

"I am sufficiently instructed," replied Katherine, "to know that, even during the reign of odious Mary, the number of the persecuted, including clergy and people of the Church of England, did not exceed seven hundred, while of the nonconformists to that Church, two thousand clergymen in one day preferred ruin and exile to the adoption of all the ceremonies forced anew on them: and of the laity who suffered then and since for nonconformity to the Liturgy of England, no calculation could be made: those who chose exile, left the half popish, half Protestant, and wholly savage, tyranny of the English Star Chamber, for the freedom of America, and carried their pure faith to a new world.

'Aye, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trod,
They have left unstained what there they found,—
Freedom to worship God!'

"Very pretty lines, and very well repeated," said Mr Everard; "but an account of the modern Churches in America would damp your enthusiasm respecting 'unstained freedom,' and the present 'holiness of the soil!'"

"Well, my dear," said the old gentleman, turning to Geraldine, who, during the latter part of this discussion, had laid aside her book, "how far have you proceeded, and what are your impressions on reading Joseph Milner a second time?"

"I have read to the end of the third century," replied Geraldine, "and I am confirmed in the impression which I had received from my uncle, that this work, pious and interesting though it be, is very imperfect as a history, inasmuch as it contains so many more sentiments than facts. Here is a passage which nearly induced me to lay down the book, as one quite unsuited to me, in my search after records of the past:—'What I cannot believe, I shall not take the trouble to transcribe; what I can, where the matter appears worthy of memory, shall be exhibited.' Here, then, you see, is not given to me the whole harvest field in which to glean; but Milner has already gleaned for me; nor is this all. I am again displeased with him for his strange inconsistency, when dwelling on 'Regeneration,' or the 'new birth' in baptism, the belief in which he calls 'poison

itself!' and then wishes (page 431) that 'Christian people had never been vexed with a controversy so frivolous as this about baptism;' as if a controversy could be *frivolous*, which related to *poisonous* doctrines! Then again, in another part, he declares that he fully believes, that this regenerating work of the Spirit *did* accompany the Sacrament of Baptism in the early ages. After all this confusion and contradiction, I cannot but think very moderately of Joseph Milner, either as a theologian or historian." Geraldine here turned again to the book in question, and read for some time in silence, till at length she exclaimed—"Oh! uncle! oh! Mr Everard, listen to this,—Milner actually asserts that the 'apostles themselves, had it not been for St Paul, would have declined from the right faith,' and this after the descent of the Holy Ghost! Does Milner then pretend to be wiser than the Holy Spirit! What blasphemy!—and how am I to trust to the accounts he will soon give me of the apostasy of the Church, when he can venture thus far to broach impossibilities. I shall read no more:"—and closing her book, she pushed it from her with indignation, not to be mollified by Mr Everard's smiling excuses for one necessarily warped by party prejudice, and bewildered by having sworn fealty to a Church, which was not sufficiently Calvinistic for his principles.

"Then," replied she, "'warped' and 'bewildered' men should not venture to write history!"

"If you succeed in finding a perfectly unbiassed and dispassionate historian," said Mr Everard, "you will indeed possess a prize. The only way to act, in the mean time, is to persevere in your determination to lay up a store of facts, from historians of opposite parties in politics or creed, and then to form your own conclusions. Go on with Milner's account, and then try Mosheim; and you will do well to take notes of each, and compare the two records, on the point you have most at heart, namely, the affinity of the Church of England with that of the early Church Catholic, or Universal."

CHAPTER XIII.

— She cries aloud for aid
To Church and councils, whom she first betrays!

Dryden.

DURING the next few weeks, Geraldine was accordingly busied in the perusal of the Church histories, recommended to her :

and, dissatisfied as she had been with the first volume of Milner, she nevertheless went steadily through the whole work, particularly noting the belief and practice of the Christians, during the ages acknowledged to be pure by the Church of England, of which the Rev. Joseph Milner was an ordained minister. "Well might Mr Everard warn me not to expect to find just the doctrines of the 'Thirty-nine Articles, and nothing more, in the early centuries," cried she, as she closed the last volume of the work, and turned to the notes, which she had previously made, of the instructions of the learned Warden, her retentive memory having enabled her to recall and fix his very words . . . "The Church of England refers her sons to a standard of interpretation, collected from the authority of ages. The appeal is made to a pure and holy time in the Universal Christian Church, against this brawling self-sufficient age:" and then followed, in reply to some inquiry,—“She (the Church of England) receives all the primitive creeds, and the first four General Councils, and submits to the common assent of the Fathers, during the first five centuries of the Catholic Church.”

Again, on farther search through her notes, Geraldine found, —“I have most assuredly told you, that our holy and apostolic Church of England does claim those first five centuries, which the Romanists also claim. Give them up the early ages of the Church, and they may indeed charge us with heresy; for departure from the Church is most guilty in the sight of God, who has declared, that those who hear her not, are as heathens.”

“If I were to rely on Milner,” thought she, “I must be compelled to give up the first ages to the Romanists: for he groans over the corruptions and superstitions of those times too much, to have a claim on them.—Come forth, then, at length, Mosheim; for I hear thou art an accurate and honest chronicler!” and Geraldine, too anxious and excited to feel fatigue, commenced anew the investigation of the rites and ceremonies, as well as of the faith and practice, of the Christian Church, during the first five centuries. She imparted to no one the result of her fresh labours, till, one morning, entering the library at an hour, when, as she expected, she found Mr Everard alone, she laid her hand on his book, to gain his attention, and entreated him to hear what she had to say. The old gentleman looked up smiling, but started when he observed the swollen eyes and pale cheeks of his favourite, and inquired anxiously what had befallen her?

Geraldine, without replying to his question, said, with forced composure, "Mr Everard, I know you to be noted for your historical accuracy. I know also, that, although accused of being a dreaming speculatist on impossibilities, you are withheld by no party feeling from seeing clearly the truth. I come, therefore, to tell you, and you alone, the result of my researches into Protestant Church History. I find, during the first five centuries :

"First ; That the Apostolical command, to anoint the dying with oil, and to pray over them, was constantly observed.

"Secondly ; That an intermediate state of purification for the soul, after death was an article of faith.

"Thirdly ; That the sign of the cross was universal in the Church.

"Fourthly ; That the consecrated elements were held up to the view of the people.

"Fifthly ; That miracles attended the preaching of Christianity : and

"Sixthly ; That the prayers of the martyrs were invoked, and that supplication was made for the faithful departed. I find, also, that the first four councils, which are received by our Church, *confirmed all these things, as articles of faith, against heretics* ; and, in short, Mr Everard, the perusal of these Protestant histories of the Church has again unsettled my mind, and I am once more as miserable as when the Warden arrived, and gave me temporary comfort, by holding out to me the Church of England, as the firm and gentle mother, in whose bosom I was to rest in peace."

As Mr Everard only uttered his usual exclamation of "Well !" Geraldine continued :—"To begin with the Sacrament of the Dying, let me again ask you, dear Sir, what reason our Church can possibly have for rejecting it ? Surely, from the definition given in the catechism, of an 'outward and visible sign of an inward spiritual grace, ordained by Christ himself'——"

"Stop there," cried Mr Everard, "the Warden would tell you, that 'Christ himself' did not institute this anointing of the dying, and that it is, therefore, rejected as a Sacrament by the Church of England."

"What an unworthy quibble !" returned Geraldine ; "for when Christ ascended on high, and received gifts for men, did he not send the Holy Ghost, to 'lead them into all truth?' and

did not the Holy Ghost inspire the sacred writers? St James, too, who (with Peter and John) was the constant and favoured friend of our Lord, might well be trusted to have known his blessed will, even without inspiration; but, when guided by the Holy Spirit!—Oh! Mr Everard, what are all these modern writers, and framers of articles, compared to an inspired apostle! How can they *dare* to disobey the plain words of Scripture, and why does the Church of England admit this epistle at all, if she is merely to follow the part of it which suits her, and to reject the rest?"

"Well! Luther so far agreed with you, that he was for rejecting the epistle altogether, 'as an epistle of straw,'" said Mr Everard.

"Yes! and what impious presumption!" cried Geraldine. "But your mention of Luther, reminds me to tell you, that I have, during this last silent month, read also the lives of most of the first Reformers, namely those of Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Bucer, together with the history of the rise of the different Protestant communities after the separation from Rome; and the conclusion is, that the modern evangelical world is the only thing to which I can liken the dogmatism, coupled with unceasing vacillation, the violence, the recrimination, and total want of brotherly love, to be found amongst the revolutionists of the sixteenth century."

"Bravo!" cried Mr Everard; "so you have at length adopted my word for the Reformation?"

"I have," replied Geraldine, "for I find my uncle's account to have been perfectly correct, when he told me, that 'the continental Reformers were not content with pruning and paring from the ancient Church, but that they uprooted, devastated, demolished; and that the result of their impetuous and extravagant career was this, that there was scarcely one prominent corruption of the Romish times, which could not be contrasted by its opposite error amongst the English dissenters, and Scotch and continental Reformers.' . . . Therefore, my search into their history has only served to drive me back to the Church of England, as the only Protestant community which can lay claim to the controlling influence of a duly appointed priesthood, uninterrupted from the first ordination by Christ our head."

"Well! and now you are falling out with this Church, because she has curtailed the number of the Sacraments, abolished

prayers for the dead, and forbidden the invocation of the saints, the adoration of the Eucharist, and belief in miracles. Is that it? — Why, Geraldine, you do not believe in these things yourself!”

“No,” replied she, “I certainly do not. But what has that to do with it!” Mr Everard started—“I mean,” continued she, “that the truth or falsehood of this belief must be tried by some surer touchstone than *my* reception or rejection of it; for certainly *I* do not pretend to infallibility. You were present, Mr Everard, I remember, when my uncle having proved the necessity of a visible Church, of which the ministers should possess authority from Christ their head, to teach the ignorant, and duly administer the Sacraments, I was anxious to be assured, past all farther doubt, that my Church did possess that unerring authority, and that when she separated from the corruptions of Rome, she had retained that which I felt to be true faith, and not presumption, namely, the guidance of the Holy Ghost—in one word “Infallibility.” I was surprised that the Warden should even attempt to make a distinction between these, for they cannot be disunited; but, if you recollect, he ended his defence of the convocation, held in London in 1571, by saying, that if the Church of England hesitate in claiming the high title of “infallible,” she is nevertheless the guardian and defender of that which was, and is, infallible, namely, the faith once delivered to the Saints, and that she was therefore worthy of implicit trust.”

“Yes,” replied Mr Everard, “I remember all that.”

“I then asked,” continued Geraldine, “whether I might set my mind at rest by this conviction, that, ‘as the Church of England is, in essentials, exactly the same with the early Catholic Church of the five first centuries, inasmuch as that Church was infallible, because still pure from its apostolic founders, so also is the Church of England; but she cannot enforce any thing that is not proved to have been held by that early Church, and of course (now listen, Mr Everard) must not *deny* any thing clearly flowing from that apostolic source.’ My uncle replied, ‘you are right, Geraldine;’ and after that final conversation, the most interesting study to me was of course the history of the early Church, where I expected to find, until you damped my ardour, the exact belief and steady practice of the ‘Book of Common Prayer,’ and of our articles; in fact, I had misgivings but on one point, the sacrament of anointing the dying. You may imagine then my surprise to find our Protestant historians

groaning over the lamentable superstitions of those very centuries, which by some unaccountable inconsistency the Church of England calls 'pure'—or must I not rather be compelled to think, by some inexcusable doctrine of expediency, for while all the other Protestant communities boldly renounce apostolic succession, and without scruple *leave* the ancient Church, the Church of England says, 'No, we must not give up these high claims and consequent authority, and therefore we must wink at the differences between our modern belief and that of the early Church!' and the consequence," added Geraldine, half-laughing in spite of her vexation, "the consequence of all this winking has been, that they have fairly gone to sleep; for when people mistrust their faith they always neglect their practice; they must stand or fall together. Now, what on earth can I do? tell me. Mr Everard: for I feel great difficulty in carrying my present perplexity to my uncle."

"Do you think, then," said he, "that the Warden has no answer to give you?"

"Indeed I know not what he can say, when the substance of my complaint will be, that from the evidence of two standard Protestant historians, he has deceived me, and that, if a party of the early Christians were to be resuscitated, and come amongst us, we should find them all rank Papists."

"He will tell you this," said Mr Everard, "that you must not be staggered by finding, even in the apostles' days, the germs of those abuses, which in the lapse of centuries grew to so flagrant an excess; and he will repeat what he has already told you, that it was not until the Council of Trent that these abuses, which hitherto had been only those of practice, were confirmed and made articles of faith."

"Yes, yes," cried Geraldine, "how well you remember, and how completely I had forgotten—oh yes, here is the note I made on that part of my uncle's instructions," and she read aloud from her little note book (p. 44):—

"The Church of Rome was corrupt in practice long before she was corrupt in principle: and although it would be difficult to defend some of the dogmas of preceding councils, she was not perhaps really schismatic till the Council of Trent. This is the date when those errors in practice which had crept in, and by degrees had been vaguely admitted, received the fatal stamp of Church authority, and, by this ~~act~~ of self-destruction, cut her-

self off from the pure and Scriptural Church, and from that time became as a dead branch.'

"I am very much obliged to you, Mr Everard, for recalling this to my memory. I shall not trouble my uncle any more; but the next thing to be done is to read the acts of all the councils, especially that of Trent, together with that previous and important one, which I always concluded to have been the most guilty, and meant to question my uncle about, namely the fifth general council; for, if the Church of England receives the four first, as inspired by the Holy Ghost, there must have been something very particular in the fifth, to have made the Church of England reject it. Now, where can I read the decrees of all the councils; for I will fairly tell you, Mr Everard, that I must now read every thing for myself. I have been deceived respecting the resemblance between the primitive Church and that of England, and have therefore become suspicious, and on my guard against being soothed and persuaded into remaining in a Church that is not guided by the Holy Ghost: a Church which I was assured was infallible, only inasmuch as she resembled another from which I find she essentially differs! She claims four general councils, and, I therefore conclude, she would date the apostasy of the ancient Church from the guilty acts of the fifth; but no! I am now directed on to the last general council ever held, as the date when the Holy Spirit no longer overruled the decisions of the Church! What then am I to think of these half-admitted, half-rejected intermediate councils? and what became of Christ's promise to be with the rulers and pastors of His Church, *always* even unto the end of the world? I must have particulars of the fifth council. Where was it convoked?"

"At Constantinople," replied Mr Everard, "and condemned the heresy of Macedonius against the divinity of the Holy Ghost."

"Now, can the Church of England venture to doubt this council?" inquired Geraldine; "Oh! she cannot, it would be impossible; I thought the fifth council had been that of Constance."

"No, the Council of Constance was the sixteenth," replied Mr Everard, "only one intervening between it and the Council of Trent."

"And what were the circumstances and order of its meeting?"

"It was convened as usual," said he, "to decide on novelties

advanced by heretics ; and, as the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon had set at rest for ever in the Church, the questions agitated on the twofold nature of Christ, against Nestorius in the one, and Eutychius in the other, so, in that of Constance, did the Church decide against the errors of John Huss."

"Of John Huss?" echoed Geraldine ; "then this sixteenth council was the cruel one that condemned poor Huss."

"Yes," said Mr Everard, "and if the Council of Nice condemned the errors of Arius, and the Councils of Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon those of other heretics, why should not the Council of Constance condemn those of Huss?"

"I do not exactly know," replied Geraldine doubtfully : "to tell you the truth," added she at length, "I know but little of the real opinions of Huss, but I know that he was cruelly deceived, respecting his personal safety at Constance, and that he was burned!"

"And therefore," rejoined Mr Everard, "styled and considered a martyr to the truth. But the truth must rest upon some surer foundation than the violent death of pious and devoted men. If in the enthusiasm of your regret and sympathy for the victims of mistaken zeal, you thought yourself bound to embrace their opinions, there would be no end to your vacillations. You would reject the blessed Trinity, with the martyred Servetus ; receive that mystery again, and, with it, all the wondrous belief of the Roman Catholic Church, with the slaughtered Jesuits of Paraguay ; renounce the belief in a divinely appointed and visible Church, with the tortured Puritans of Scotland ; and then re-admit its authority with the Church of England martyr, Archbishop Sharpe!"

"Certainly," replied Geraldine, "the truth, as you say, cannot be established merely by martyrdom ; and, if the articles or belief in a Church do not warrant the commission of violence, we must attribute these cruel acts to the party rage of a few ; though, with respect to Huss, it seems impossible to decide thus charitably, as the whole council condemned him."

"The ecclesiastical council pronounced his opinions to be heretical," said Mr Everard ; "but all that followed was the work of the civil power, and would be as deeply regretted by all ranks and states of Catholics, as those other martyrdoms, which I have mentioned, would be by the Calvinists and Episcopalians of the present day"

"It would be, indeed, unfair," said Geraldine, "to taunt a pious Calvinist of these times with the murder of Servetus, or that of Archbishop Sharpe; and we of the Church of England truly feel that the cruelties of the Star Chamber belonged to that age of violence, and not to the tenets of the Episcopalian Church."

"Very true," replied Mr Everard; "the ages of bloody persecution are passed, thank God!"

"And yet," added Geraldine smiling, "you are such a general explainer and *excuser*, that I am quite prepared to hear the defence of these persecutors, if not of the persecutions!"

"Well, then," returned he, "you shall not be disappointed. In treating heresy as a capital crime, the vast importance of salvation was recognised; while he who by forgery injured the property of another, or who by violence deprived him of life, was considered less a thief and a murderer, than he who by evil doctrine would lead him to everlasting death. Now, are you prepared to say that this principle is not borne out by Scripture?"

"I remember several texts," said Geraldine, "in which we are told to avoid and fear a heretic, but none that would warrant my slaying him; except," added she, smiling, "I turn to the Old Testament, and hew him to pieces, as Samuel did Agag!"

"The principle, on which the ecclesiastical court often refused to protect an *obstinate* teacher of evil doctrine from the civil power," continued Mr Everard, "was founded on their firm trust in a divinely appointed Church, which, in doctrine, could not err. Hence, every spiritual rebel against that Church was considered, not only in vital error himself, which would comparatively signify but little, but, by the dissemination of his doctrine, a pest to society, and therefore to be, as a dead branch, hewn off and cast into the fire."

"But tell me this," said Geraldine anxiously; "is it a *dogma* of the Roman Catholic Church, that persecution is lawful, and that faith is not to be kept with heretics?"

"These are no more warranted by the articles of faith in the Church, than any other of the atrocious calumnies raised against her. The Church pronounces on the doctrine, not on the person, and, so far from claiming, actually disclaims the power of persecuting. Had I my proper books at hand, I could refer you to the doctrines of Catholic theologians, and to the oaths of the British Catholics. You shall see these in course of time.

You will do well, however, in the meanwhile, to turn to some facts in our British history, in which Protestant faith with Catholics was so openly violated, and the breach of it defended with so little shame, that you will find the aspersed party shining in bright contrast to their accusers. Witness the treasonable desertion of Mary, by the Bishops Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Hooper, Roger Poynel, Sandys, and every other Protestant of note, for no other reason than because she was a Catholic. Contrast this conduct with that of the Catholics, on the succession of her Protestant sister, Elizabeth, when, although the Catholics had become far more numerous and powerful than the Protestants, *not a hand was raised against her!* Take a view also on the other side of the Tweed, where the Protestant party had deposed their sovereign, in spite of their oath of allegiance, and where the reformer Knox publicly preached that ‘neither promise nor oath could oblige any man to obey or give assistance to tyrants against God;’ his colleague Goodman, adding, ‘If governors fall from God, to the gallows with them!’—while Buchanan maintained that princes might be deposed by their people, if they were tyrants against truth, and that their subjects were free from their oaths and obedience. Such also were the maxims of Calvin, Beza, and the Huguenots of France: but, mark me, recrimination is not argument, and I lead you to search for these, and innumerable other such records of Protestants breaking faith with Catholics, to prove what? why, that the wild fanaticism of individuals is not to be visited on the body; and in repeating that which you have often heard enforced—namely, that the *accredited doctrines* of a community are the test by which alone that community must be tried, I must add that in vain will the enemies of the Catholic Church seek in her Creed for that vile hackneyed calumny of ‘not keeping faith with heretics!’ But to return to the Council of Constance, and the uncertainty respecting its infallibility, what is your present feeling concerning it?”

“Why, the case appears to be plainly this,” said Geraldine; “the Church of England *almost* receives the Council of Constance because she cannot afford, in point of date, to vote the Catholic Church guilty, while there was no substance of a Church to oppose to its authority; and she cannot help *almost* admitting that the ‘private interpretation’ of John Huss was no more lawful than that of Arius, of Nestorius, or of Eutychius,

against the duly ordained, and duly convened pastors of the Church. But then she *almost* rejects both the council and the admission, because some of the opinions of Huss were adopted at the Reformation, and Huss himself considered to be a glorious martyr to the Protestant cause. But I cannot 'almost admit' and 'almost reject!' and being obliged to make my final choice between the assembled Church and one man, I must stand by the former, and receive the Council of Constance, in spite of my commiseration for John Huss, and my indignation against the Emperor Sigismund."

Geraldine having read all that she could find in the Protestant library of Elverton Hall, on the subject of the faith of the early Church, and the decisions of councils received by the Church of England, now made up her mind to ask her uncle for the book, hitherto withheld from her, in which the Catholic Church sets forth the proofs on which she founds her claim to conformity with those contested ages of pure Christianity. "If I find that this work," thought she, "is but a plausible piece of eloquence, or if it venture to advance anything without proper references, I shall then so far take comfort, that I shall inquire no farther into the wanderings or the quarrels of *any* community, but rest where I am, in the nominal Church of England, feeling the utmost sorrow for her hollowness, her deceit; but still, finding that she is no worse than her neighbours, I shall suppose that God has confounded the councils of His Church throughout the world!"... Geraldine was urged on to make the immediate trial of the conformity of Catholics with the primitive Church, by the approaching departure of the Warden for Oxford, and she determined on that very day to state the result of her late inquiry into Protestant Church history, and to petition for the book sent her by Sir Eustace de Grey.

Her heart beat violently as she went through her appointed task, although somewhat supported by the presence of Mr Everard; and she could scarcely articulate her determination to know what was to be said on the Catholic side of the question.

"The mass of the laity, and especially women," said the Warden, "are not required to possess controversial knowledge of a Church, against which their rulers have seen such just cause to protest!"

"Indeed, uncle, it appears to me," said Geraldine, rallying her courage, "that every woman 'protesting,' should know some-

thing of what she protests against ! There would not only be more justice, but more stability, in her title of ' Protestant,' which begins now to appear to me, when without that knowledge, to be a vague empty name

The Warden's brow was overclouded, and he replied very gravely, " I had flattered myself, child, that the hours of thought and care I had bestowed on you had not been thrown away, and that the clear and methodical manner, in which, adapting my instructions to your capacity, I had proved to you that your own Church was the perfect and the true, would have remained stamped on your memory through life !"

" My dear kind uncle," replied Geraldine, " believe me that not one link in your chain of argument has been lost by me. I have remembered your very words ; for after each conversation I wrote all down, and will show you how accurate I have been, whenever you like to see my note-book. I never know which the most to admire, whenever I refer to it, the learning, the zeal, or the eloquence, to which I have listened ; and I feel that, on that side of the question which you kindly undertook to defend to me, there can be nothing farther to be said."

" Then," said the Warden, " what can you possibly require ?"

" Simply to hear the other side," replied Geraldine.

" Cannot you trust the confessors and martyrs of the venerable Establishment to which you belong, without exposing yourself to the danger of your own less trustworthy judgment," returned the Warden ; " when you shall have heard both sides of a difficult question, how can you be sure that you will reject the evil and choose the good ?"

Geraldine paused an instant, and then said timidly, " I think that the Holy Spirit would direct my judgment !"

" You can scarcely hope for the Holy Ghost's directing power in your behalf," said Dr Sinclair, with increased solemnity, " when you act in direct opposition to His express command of obedience to the rulers of the Church."

Geraldine with equal solemnity, and trembling with emotion, said, " When at the Reformation, those rulers of the Church divided in opinion, the people could not obey both parties, with whom lay the truth, God knows, I do not ; but I claim, as did the early reformers, the right of choice !"

" Everard !" cried the Warden with some bitterness to his friend,

"this is your work ! By your dreams of universal conciliation, and your smoothing away of all vital differences, you have rendered null the work I had thought effected. And this you have done for the second time in my family. Not content with instilling these visions of a reconciliation with Rome into the mind of the mother, where, blessed be God ! they remained but as visions, you must now impart them to the daughter, whose cast of mind and disposition it will not do to tamper with ; for with her nothing remains as mere theory."

"Blame not Mr Everard," said Geraldine, distressed at being the cause of even a passing estrangement between the friends : "his plans of universal conciliation and union between Christian communities, would rather incline me to be a Reformer, or, as he calls it, a 'reviver,' of my own Church, than to hazard leaving it. But, if I may venture to say thus far, I feel that no one could now influence me ; I must judge for myself. You have assured me that I was right in my conviction, that a Church must hold *unalterable* truths, and I am determined to investigate which body of Christians have held the apostolic faith unwaveringly down to this day."

The Warden, deeply pondering, now left the room. A few hours after this conversation, his travelling carriage was at the door, and, after an affectionate, though painful, farewell, the uncle and niece parted ; the former retracing the road to his college duties, the latter remaining, full of thought and emotion, in the solitude of her book-room.

CHAPTER XIV.

'Tis said with ease, but never can be prov'd,
The Church her old foundations has remov'd,
And built new doctrines on unstable sands ;
Judge her ye winds and rains. Ye prov'd her, yet she stands.
Dryden.

THE day after the departure of Dr Sinclair, Geraldine once more read the notes taken from his instructions, and then referred to those she had made from the Church histories of Mosheim and Milner. "I know nothing of logic and mathematics," thought she, "in the way of school learning ; but my natural sense must tell me, that, if the primitive Church was pure in doctrine, and the Church of England pure in doctrine, they must agree in belief. If therefore they do not agree in belief, either the primitive Church was in error, or the Church of England is

in error, for truth can be but one!" and Geraldine, still retaining by her the Protestant records of the early Church, now opened the "Faith of Catholics," and was soon completely absorbed in the question of agreement between the modern Catholics and the primitive Church. She considered that it would be useless to examine those points in which there was perfect agreement between the Catholic Church and the Reformed Establishment of England, namely, the 'Apostolicity,' 'Unity,' and 'Visibility,' of the Church of Christ, of which the Warden had proved the necessity; and she therefore resolved to confine her attention to those subjects of disunion between the Churches, in which they mutually appealed to the early ages of Christianity. In the volume now open before her, the plan of reference, first, to Scripture, secondly, to the authorized divines of the 'pure ages' of Christianity, and thirdly, to the decisions of the last Council of the Universal Church, was exactly suited to the degree of deference which Geraldine felt disposed to yield to each; and, turning to that Sacrament which had first roused her attention to the short-comings of her own Church, and which, from the united testimony of Milner and Mosheim, she found to have been undoubtingly received by the early Christians, she first read the 'Proposition,' or the real belief of the Catholic Church on this point. "The Sacrament which is administered to dying persons, to strengthen them in their passage out of this life into a better, from the oil that is used on this occasion, Catholics call 'Extreme Unction,' and they believe it to be divinely instituted." Then follow the reasons for this belief, *Mark* vi. 12, 13:—"And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them."

Epistle of *James* v. 14, 15. "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man: and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him."

Next follow comments on, and enforcement of, this apostolical injunction from St John Chrysostom, St Augustine, and other fathers of the Church;* and then is given the extract from the Council of Trent:—"The Synod declares and teaches, that our merciful Saviour, who was willing that His servants should

* The limits of this little publication do not allow of the insertions of these and following quotations; we can only refer the reader to the work above-mentioned, entitled "The Faith of Catholics."

at all times be provided with salutary remedies against all the attacks of their enemies, as in other sacraments He prepared means whereby during life they might be preserved from every grievous evil, so would he guard the close of life by the sacrament of 'Extreme Unction,' as by a strong barrier." It then observes, that this sacrament, instituted by Christ, was first intimated by St Mark, and afterwards promulgated by St James.

Geraldine, with her notes from Mosheim at hand, then again ascertained that a state of purification to the soul after death was an article of faith amongst the Christians of the early centuries, and opened "The Faith of Catholics" at that part. "Catholics hold there is a 'Purgatory,' that is to say, a place or state where souls, departing this life, with remission of their sins as to the guilt or eternal pain, but yet liable to some temporal punishment still remaining due, or else not perfectly freed from the blemish of some defects, which we call venial sins,—are purged before their entrance into heaven, where nothing that is defiled can enter." Then follows the next proposition, inseparably connected with the preceding, of "Prayers for the Dead." "We also believe that such souls so detained in Purgatory, being the living members of Christ Jesus, are relieved by the prayers and suffrages of their fellow-members here on earth. But where this place be, of what nature or quality the pains be, how long souls may be therè detained, in what manner the suffrages made in their behalf be applied, whether by way of satisfaction or intercession, are questions superfluous and impertinent as to faith."

Geraldine was pleased with the temperate and guarded manner in which this belief in a separate state was expressed, and then proceeded to the scriptural warrant for it, the first and most explicit authority being, however, from Machabees, which, in the Church of England is received doubtfully, and placed amongst the apocryphal books of Scripture. Before, therefore, she dwelt much on the offering for the dead made by Judas Machabeus, she determined to know why the Catholic Church retained, and the Protestant Churches rejected, these books, the principal importance of which, seemed evidently contained in these very verses; and, rising from her present occupation, she sought her friend Mr Everard, accosting him with, "Pray, my dear Sir, why did the Protestants at the Reformation reject those books as apocryphal which the Catholics still retain? I principally

refer to the books of the Machabees."—"Because," replied he, "they urge that the Christian Church could only receive the books of the Old Testament from the guardianship and sanction of the Jewish Church; and the books of the Machabees were not received as canonical by the Jews, neither were those others, which therefore the Protestants receive as doubtful or apocryphal."

"That, indeed, was a strong argument in favour of the Protestants," returned Geraldine, pondering on this weighty reason. "I cannot think how the Catholics can justify their belief in the divine inspiration of these books."

"In the first place," replied Mr Everard, "the Books of the Old Testament were compiled by Esdras, and sanctioned by the Sanhedrim, during his life: how then could those books be in his list which were written after his time? Of course, a fresh revisal must be made, a fresh sanction given; but this was now the authorized task of the Christian, not the Jewish, Church."

"When did the Christian Church admit these books into the canonical Scripture?" said Geraldine.

"They were admitted at the fourth Council of Carthage, together with that book of the New Testament, hitherto held as doubtful, namely, the Apocalypse, or Revelations. Now, if you receive this Book of Revelations from the authority of a Church council, upon what principle do you refuse to receive the Machabees, admitted at the same time, except on the plea, that, directly the Christian Church differed from the Sanhedrim, the Holy Ghost ceased to direct her councils? Are you prepared to abide by this?"

"No, indeed," replied Geraldine; "but I was not aware that any doubt had arisen, respecting the Apocalypse, amongst the early Christians. Then the assertion of the Church of England, that she receives only those books as canonical which had never been held doubtful in the Church, is quite false."

"Not only the Apocalypse was long held as doubtful, but also the Epistle to the Hebrews, and other parts of the New Testament; namely, the last Chapter of Mark, the twenty-second of Luke, the eighth of John, the second of Jude, the second of Peter; and the second and third of John; while various spurious gospels and epistles were circulated amongst the faithful. In a previous council, held at Laodicea, these spurious gospels and epistles were pronounced to be such, and accordingly rejected;

but still the Book of Revelations, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Books of the Machabees, were not formally received till the Council of Carthage, in 397, (for the progress of these researches was slow and deliberate) when the canon of Scripture was finally settled, never to be afterwards disputed, till the period of the so-called Reformation."

"Then, do the Catholics receive as canonical, all those books termed apocryphal by Protestants?"

"They do so. No Catholic reads or listens with doubt to any part of the written word, being assured, that, if doubtful, these books would have been rejected by his Church, together with the Gospel of St Peter, and other spurious works."

"Thank you, my kind friend," said Geraldine; "all this has been very interesting to me."

"And yet," said Mr Everard, "it has been extraneous to the object you have immediately in view, that of proving the conformity of the present Catholic Church with the early ages of faith, an object which, woman-like, you quit directly, some new opening for research presents itself."

"But this account of the reception and rejection of the true and spurious books of the written word, is useful, as well as interesting," replied Geraldine.

"It is so," said he, "and therefore it was not until I had given the information you desired, that I reminded you of your main object."

"The conformity of the modern Catholic with the primitive Catholic Church, is certainly the principal point at present," replied she; "but although this conformity, which I now have scarcely a doubt of proving, ought to decide at once my preference of this Catholic and unchangeable Church, still my Protestant habit of investigation leads me to find such interest in proving all things from Scripture, that I cannot relinquish the chief value of this Catholic book." And having now been convinced that she dared no more reject the Book of Machabees, than that of Revelations, or the Epistle to the Hebrews, received solely on the divinely-directed decision of the Church, Geraldine returned with fresh pleasure to the account of the offering made by Judas Machabeus, in the second book, twelfth chapter, from the forty-third to the forty-sixth verse:—"Judas, the valiant commander, having made a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem, for sacrifice to be offered for the

sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection. For, if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. And, because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins."

The Scriptural references for that place of departed spirits, where they are detained till purified from all stain, are as follows :—*St Peter* iii. 18, 19, 20. "Because Christ also died once for our sins, the just for the unjust, that He might offer us to God, being put to death indeed in the flesh, but brought to life in the spirit. In which also he came and preached to those spirits that were in prison, which had been incredulous, (or, in the Protestant version, *disobedient*) when they waited for the patience of God in the days of Noah."

Then the warrant for believing that, in this prison, a purifying process takes place:—"And every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour. For other foundation can no man lay but that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be manifest; for the day of the Lord shall declare it of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, which he hath built upon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's works burn, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire!" Geraldine had, from the writings of some old divines, and from the conversation of her uncle, the Warden, long held a vague belief in the separate state of souls. She had also been internally convinced, that purification was essential to many, who departed this life; having built on the only sure foundation, but whose imperfect tempers, and other defilements, must be purged, before the soul could enter the "New Jerusalem," of which it is said,—"There shall not enter into it any thing defiled." "Yes," thought she, "purification even to a faithful soul, is, from the apostle's testimony, clear enough: still I do not see that this process must necessarily take place in that 'prison,' and not be instantaneously effected at the day of final judgment." She then had recourse to the only method left for the Protestant to arrive at the true sense of Scripture in difficult passages, namely, that of abiding by the sense of a word when once it has been ascertained, by its simple

position, in any plain part of Scripture: and, having fixed the meaning of the word 'prison,' from St Peter's account of it, she turned to those parables of Christ, in which, when the offender is 'cast into prison,' he has to 'pay the uttermost farthing,' before his release. After dwelling on this, Geraldine was pleased to see the following extracts from those early Fathers, who are equally claimed by the Established, as by the Catholic, Church:—Third century,—St Cyprian.—“It is one thing to be a petitioner for pardon, another to arrive at glory: one to be cast into prison, and not go out thence till the last farthing be paid, and another to receive at once the reward of faith and virtue: one, in punishment of sin, to be purified by long suffering, and purged by long fire, and another, to have expiated all sins by previous suffering: one, in fine, at the day of Judgment, to wait the sentence of the Lord, another to receive an immediate crown from Him.” Then follow the same sentiments on the text, and comments on the word 'prison,' from Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, St Basil, St Cyril, St Ambrose, St Gregory of Nyssa, St Chrysostom, St Jerome, and a long train of holy and orthodox writers, terminating with St Augustine, who, after much learned comment, adds this aspiration:—“Cleanse me so in this life, make me such, that I may not stand in need of that purifying fire, designed for those who shall be saved yet so as by fire.”

Extracts from the Liturgies of the early Churches of Jerusalem, Rome, Constantinople, and others, proved the union of belief in the doctrine of a separate state, and Geraldine, having finished these, read the following from the fourth Council of Carthage:—“Penitents, who have carefully submitted to the laws of the Church, should they accidentally die on the road, or by sea, where no assistance can be given, shall be remembered in the prayers and offerings of the faithful.”

From this early council, in the pure ages of the Church, the last appeal was to the final Council of Trent, which states as follows:—“As the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Spirit, has taught in her councils, from the sacred writings, and the ancient tradition of the Fathers, and this synod has now recently declared that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls therein detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar,—Therefore, this holy synod gives her commands to the bishops to be particularly careful that the sound doctrine concerning Purgatory,

which has been delivered by the holy Fathers and sacred councils, be taught, and held, and believed, and be every where preached ; that all abstruse and subtle questions, which tend not to edification, and from which piety seldom draws any advantage, be avoided in public discourses before the people."

The next point of faith noted down to have been held by the early Christians, was the intercessory prayers of those departed into glory, especially the martyrs, for their militant brethren on earth. Mosheim records the 'superstition' boldly, and Milner, after many regrets and excuses, owns the same fatal corruption. Geraldine had passed over the *sentiments* of both historians, and had simply noted the *fact*, that, in the first five centuries of the Church, Christians implored the intercessory prayers of the martyrs, and other departed saints. She now turned to the 'Faith of Catholics,' and read,—“ Catholics are persuaded that the angels and saints in heaven, replenished with charity, pray for us, the fellow-members of the latter here on earth ; that they rejoice in our conversion ; that, seeing God, they see and know in Him all things suitable to their happy state ; and that God may be inclined to hear their requests made in our behalf, and, for their sakes, may grant us many favours ;—therefore we believe that it is good and profitable to invoke their intercession. Can this mode of intercession be more injurious to Christ our *Mediator*, than it is for one Christian to beg the prayers of another ? However, Catholics are taught not so to rely on the prayers of others, as to neglect their own duty to God, in imploring his divine mercy and goodness, in mortifying the deeds of the flesh, in despising the world, in loving and serving God and their neighbours, in following the footsteps of Christ our Lord, who is the way, the truth, and the life, to whom be honour and glory for ever and ever : Amen."

Touched by the sentiments here expressed, Geraldine read this point of Catholic doctrine twice, and then, without dwelling at that time on the triple reference which followed, to Scripture, to the Fathers, and to the Church councils, opened her note book again, and found that miraculous powers of healing, and other supernatural gifts, were believed to remain in the Church of Christ during the early ages : and now, re-opening her Catholic book, she searched for the real doctrine of Catholics on that point. Not meeting with the subject directly, she turned to the table of contents, under the title of 'Miracles,' or 'miraculous

gifts,' but in vain ; till having, in the hope of discovering the subject under a different head, turned over every leaf in the book, and being reluctant again to disturb Mr Everard, she endeavoured fruitlessly to unravel the mystery of so important an omission as that of 'miracles,' in a book professing to state the 'faith of Catholics.' No opportunity occurred of consulting her learned friend till the evening, when, having expressed her surprise at having been baffled where she had the least expected it, Mr Everard increased this surprise still more, by asking "how she came to expect, amongst the vital doctrines of Catholics, that which was optional to all, and forced on none?"

"Do you really mean, Mr Everard, that Catholics do not believe in miracles?"

"They must, as true Catholics," replied he, "believe in the miracles of the Old and New Testament ; but I repeat that the Church forces on no one the belief in any later fact of supernatural intervention."

"Then why do they choose to believe in such perpetual wonders as are occurring, or appear to occur, in their Church, till Catholics have become the laughing-stock of Protestants?"

"They are not forced to credit, but, at the same time, they are not forced to discredit, those manifestations of supernatural intervention, to which, if attested by well accredited authority, they yield historical belief. The enlightened Catholic owns, with pious gratitude, that the *power* of miracles has continued in the Church of God ; for he finds no warrant, either in Scripture or ecclesiastical record, to suppose that any of the divine gifts once imparted are withdrawn ; but, on the contrary, finds every thing to confirm his belief that the promises of the unchangeable God are for ever. The well instructed Catholic feels assured, therefore, that God has continued in and by his Church, miraculous powers ; but he expects the manifestation of them to be but seldom, and when they do take place, he is ready to own that the judgments of the Lord are inscrutable, and his ways past finding out!"

"The belief of the *enlightened* Catholic is perfectly comprehensible and beautiful," said Geraldine ; "but that same belief in weak and ignorant minds leads to all that folly and superstition, of which I have heard so much to disgust and alarm me."

"Yes!" said Mr Everard, "that same belief would lead the

ignorant and weak to expect that, on every occasion seemingly important, within the narrow circle of their intelligence, God would vouchsafe a miracle. Their own especial place of worship, their favourite saint, his relics, and representation, stand in the foreground of their limited view, and they are ready to believe in perpetual wonders respecting them. Still, in the credulity of the most ignorant Catholic—mark this, Geraldine—the germ of truth is there, in the persuasion that God Almighty's love and watchfulness are ever with his Church, and that ministering spirits hover round its courts."

CHAPTER XV.

Why should we faint and fear to live alone,
 Since all alone, so heaven has will'd, we die ;
 Not e'en the tenderest heart and next our own,
 Knows half the reasons why we smile and sigh.

Keeble.

AND here, for a time, Geraldine paused, not from thought, for that was impossible, but from giving utterance to the results of her unremitting labours, even to Mr Everard. And there were moments when she looked so ill, and the continued excitement of her studies gave so hectic a glow to her cheek, that her two attached friends became anxious to give a change to her thoughts, and rejoiced when, on the 8th of October, 1834, the authorities of Elverton gave public notice that the parish church and chapels were to be re-opened on the following Sunday, and that no restriction was to be henceforth imposed on the parishioners, beyond that of not frequenting the new burial ground, in which the victims of the late disease had been interred.

Sunday came, and the sun shone forth in splendour to grace the day of gladness. The church of the valley was thronged, and the countenance of the Reverend Edmund Sinclair, as he once more addressed his congregation, beamed with holy joy. The text was from the sixty-second Psalm, "In God is my health and my glory, the rock of my might, and in God is my trust ;" and most eloquently did the preacher impress on the hearts of his hearers the gratitude due to the First Great Cause of deliverance from the late awful visitation. In the town of Elverton, the church and chapels were equally crowded, and the meeting-houses thronged to suffocation. Nought but kindness and sympathy for a time were felt between the hitherto contending parties in the neighbourhood, and the lovers of peace and conciliation began to hope, that

health of mind would unite with health of body to render that beautiful part of —shire

“ A little spot in mercy lent,
A home before the grave.”

Visitors flocked to the hall, and Katherine Graham, who had lately begun to watch her friend with anxiety, was greatly pleased, as well as surprised, to find Geraldine denied to none, and cheerful and friendly to all, entering with apparant ease of heart into various plans of re-union with the families around, and scarcely once reverting with regret to the constant interruption she now sustained, from the sociability run rampant, which had seized on all the neighbourhood. The fact was, that Geraldine, after long indecision of purpose, had now resolved to seek an interview with the Catholic priest of Elverton, as soon as she could do so without risk to the friendship between her uncle and Mr Everard : and when, after severe conflict, a fixed resolution is formed, there is peace, even before this resolution can be acted upon ; and while the cherished under-current of thought lies hidden beneath, the mind, become master of itself, can lend a gay and quiescent attention to all around.

Amongst the several topics of conversation brought by the visitors to the Hall, was the discovery that, during the past months of the disease, when the Abbey Hill had been deserted by even the children of the town, the small inner court of the ruin had been floored and roofed, and a window of richly painted glass inserted in the still perfect carved work of the arch at the eastern extremity. Walls had also been raised to form a small but complete residence within the vast fabric ; and the whole had been so skilfully arranged, that no change was perceptible from without excepting that of the painted window. No one, however, could arrive at any certainty respecting the perpetrator of those innovations on property hitherto possessed by the corporation of the town, and which, from the pride attached to its singular beauty, it was supposed could never have become the property of any individual but at an enormous pecuniary sacrifice. Geraldine, who had immediately guessed the whole to be the work of Sir Eustace de Grey, now hesitated, as she remembered the impoverished fortune of the young Catholic ; and fixed the deed more upon Mr Everard, whose enthusiasm for the ancient worship would lead him to delight in its restoration, in buildings erected in former days for that purpose where all would be in harmony

with the dignity and pomp of the Catholic ritual. But Mr Everard would own to no more than the painted window, on which he expatiated both as artist and antiquary, appealing to the learned "Whitaker" for sympathy and support. "Yes!" said he, after a digression to piers, arches, transepts, and the date of brickwork, and returning to his cherished window, "Yes! our ancestors were a serious thoughtful race of men. The habits of their minds were religious, however they might sometimes deviate in their acts. They loved to see the dim religious light through the devotional glow of painted glass. Ah! how unlike the stare and glare of our modern chapels."

"And when are we again to visit the ruin, and see this new Catholic chapel?" said Geraldine.

"Church! not chapel," rejoined Mr Everard. "The church of St Hugh, which perished with its abbey, under reformation zeal, now rises like a phoenix from the ashes of its parent—the child, it is true, of adversity, but full of hope and native strength."

"There is one thing you may confidently expect," said Geraldine smiling, "that the Reformation Society, which also may boast of rising from the ashes of its parent, will soon come to Elverton for the anniversary meeting, and the battle between your painted glass, and arguments quite as brittle may be daily expected."

"It is marvellous," replied Mr Everard, "how averse the cold and sullen genius of Calvinism is to the dignity, and how dead to the sanctity, of that feeling, which leads the Catholic to offer the best of nature and of art to his God."

* Still so perverse and opposite,
As if they worshipped God in spite!"

"And is the present humble little chapel in Elverton to be merged in this abbey church?" said Geraldine; "and will that pious and heroic man, Mr Bernard, inhabit the ruin!"

"All this is in progress," replied Mr Everard, "but we are prepared for opposition and delays of all kinds,—open enemies, timid friends, want of money."

"Want of money," echoed Geraldine, "Ah! if that be all"—then suddenly checking herself, she said in a subdued tone, "Do you think my father—do you think my uncle—"

"Yes," said the old gentleman, "I do think that both your natural guardians would be displeased by your forwarding this work; and, therefore, give it not another thought."

Mr Everard was here called away, and Geraldine, turning to Miss Graham, exclaimed, "Katherine, you seem to be so perfectly engrossed as to be unconscious of all the interesting subjects we have been discussing. Has this really been the case, or are you afraid to trust yourself to any farther conversation on the alarming increase of Popery?"

"No, indeed," replied Katherine, "for I was deeply engaged in this tale by 'Charlotte Elizabeth,' called the 'Siege of Derry,' a tale of Irish controversy and bloodshed, in which I find some truths, which I think, my dear, your favourite Mr Bernard would find it difficult to refute. I am in truth reading more for you than for myself."

"Or rather," replied Geraldine, "you find, perhaps, those hackneyed assertions which every Protestant can repeat, clothed in more forcible language by this clever woman, and you receive them as incontrovertible truths. Now, so far from being dismayed at any thing advanced by this authoress, I am ready to listen and reply to any extract you may please to give me, as we cannot apply to Mr Bernard."

"Well, then," said Katherine, turning back a few pages, "answer this grave charge, if you can. After describing one of the principal characters, who is intended to represent the body of the Catholic peasantry, the description continues thus—'To show him the evil of his nature, and the peril in which he stood, as a helpless sinner, was the necessary prelude to humbling him before the Lord in prayer, for that renewing process which God the Spirit can alone achieve: and whosoever has seriously tried this experiment with a member of the Church of Rome, must bear testimony, that, until her bulwarks be levelled, the task is hopeless. The transgressor may be convinced, deeply convinced of guilt, but humbled he cannot be, so long as he believes that his own doings and sufferings can atone for the sin which oppresses him. Seeking wherewithal he shall appear before the Lord, the inquirer is met by a host of deceptive helps, absolutions, prayers, penances, almsdeeds, imaginary and purchasable merits: and should all fail on this side of the grave, he is assured of purifying fire beyond its boundary, and efficacious masses to expedite the work, alike welcome to carnal pride, and to spiritual sloth; he is presented with a scheme, which offers him a self-righteous plea on one hand, and on the other dispenses with that sanctification which God has pronounced indispensable. And can it be that any person taught

of the Holy Spirit should attempt to pour into these bottles of rotten leather the new wine of unadulterated truth? should essay to patch their worn and perishing garments of rags with the firm fabric of gospel doctrine? should flatter himself that Christ will deign to rule in a temple where every species of idolatrous abomination is to cluster around His footstool, to obscure His kingly glory, to intrude upon His priestly prerogative, to interpolate His prophetic mandate, and, only as chief among many saviours, to yield Him the worthless homage of divided praise?"

"Have you finished?" said Geraldine, observing that Katherine now paused.

"Not quite," replied she, "but, as you are so tired of the Protestant plea of 'coming out of Babylon,' I was going to stop here."

"Just as you please," said Geraldine, "one falsehood more cannot overwhelm me."

"No, I have read sufficient for thought and argument, in all these heavy accusations from the pen of one, whose love for Ireland and experience of Popery must give weight to her account. And now, Geraldine, what can you say?"

"I can only repeat what I have before urged on the subject," replied Geraldine, "that, while one set of Christians believe and teach that they are accepted *unconditionally*, and the other class believe and teach that they are accepted conditionally, they never can agree, and seldom understand each other. The Catholic believes that in and by Christ he is forgiven, *provided* he fulfils the terms stipulated by his adorable Master; but that this obedience to His commands should be a substitute for Him who gave them; that *practical* repentance is carnal pride, and continued devotion is spiritual sloth; all these inconsistent assertions, these absurd contradictions, prove to me only still farther, the blind hatred against the Catholic Church, which Satan, as an angel of light, breathes into every Protestant mind."

"Dear Geraldine," said Katherine, "you are ready armed always to defend the Catholics, and, amongst other things to which you blind yourself, is the obvious fact of their self-righteousness."

"But, my dear Katherine, I cannot do more than read their accredited articles of faith, contained in their catechisms and books of authorized devotion, which give the lie to these infamous calumnies. Now, as you will neither read the Catholic books,

attend the Catholic service, nor ask of Catholics an explanation of their faith, how can you judge so well as I can? You may call me partial, but at any rate I have taken the only road to impartiality, that of hearing both sides of a question."

"But, Geraldine, *how* have you heard both sides? Surely, with an evident bias towards one side; now this can scarcely be called impartiality!"

"Still, supposing that I had done so, there was at least more approach to impartial judgment than in nearing *only* the favourite side. But, Katherine, let us suppose a judge, occupied during weeks and months in hearing the prosecuting side of a difficult question; let us suppose that witnesses from far and near have been brought into court to prove the guilt of the defendant, but that the fact of his guilt is stated differently by every witness; that one gives one date, another gives another, and that these witnesses wind up with mutual accusations and recriminations.—Most assuredly, the judge prepares to hear the defence of the accused with a prepossession in his favour; but what has thus disposed him, but the falsehoods, the contradictions of the accusing party? Thus, indeed, was my own mind disposed favourably towards the Catholic Church, from the false charges and contradictory statements of Protestant writers against her; but now, when her voice is heard, were she in her turn to utter contradictions, did I discover that, as her enemies assert, she had in one council annulled the faith of a former—that, in *doctrine*, Pope had been matched against Pope—that she too had accommodated her faith to the 'spirit of the times' and the 'advance of knowledge'—I should cast her also from me."

"And suppose this should, after all, really take place," said Miss Graham.

"Oh! God forbid," exclaimed Geraldine.

"Why, others have, in a fit of impatience at the errors of their own community, and attracted by all that is so soothing to human feelings in the Roman Catholic Church—others have weighed her boasted sanctity in the balance, and have found it wanting. For instance, the great Chillingworth—"

"And you can bring, as an instance, the inconstant Chillingworth!" exclaimed Geraldine indignantly: "he who, in renouncing Catholicity, parted with those truths, which you, as a Calvinist, hold most dear; and among the first of these, the mystery of the Trinity!—But it is ever so with those who,

throwing off the belief in a divinely appointed Church, are left as wandering stars for ever! No, Katherine, there is no reasonable possibility that I could ever act thus, unless thought, and research, and prayer, were to fail me."

"They cannot be looked upon as unfailing, if pursued in the spirit of error," observed Miss Graham, "else why are so many sincere and pious souls led into error, notwithstanding incessant study, and ever ardent prayer?"

"There, Katherine, you have unconsciously uttered the strongest practical argument against private judgment that could be produced. We both find, from our knowledge of ecclesiastical history, and from our acquaintance and even friendship with the learned and devout of our own day, that thought, and research, and prayer, *do* fail! and that two pious and intellectual men, after heartfelt prayer, will, from the same sacred page, draw opposite conclusions on vital points of faith! The only resource left to the Protestant, when pondering on this lamentable fact, is, to hope against hope, that both these inquiries may be sufficiently near the truth for salvation; while the Catholic turns with delight to that assurance of his Lord and God, given to His Church, that the gates of hell—viz. errors in faith—shall not prevail against her; and, trusting the voice of his Church, as he would the voice of God, his mind rests in peace—that 'peace which' *indeed* 'passeth all understanding!'"

CHAPTER XVI.

A loftier strain—a deeper music,
Something that may bear
The spirit up on slow yet solemn wings,
Unsway'd by gusts of earth.

Keble.

THE following day was Sunday, and the two friends walked together, accompanied by Mr Everard, through the park, and by the river side, to the parish church. The discourse was on that day addressed to the children of the village school, and beautiful was the exhortation given to the little creatures by their holy and tender pastor. He was, however, suffering from so severe an attack of indisposition, that the sermon concluded abruptly, and, after the blessing, the clerk announced that there would be no evening service at Woodbridge church. After many inquiries at the vicarage, where Mrs Sinclair assured the anxious niece, that her uncle merely required rest, Geraldine

and Katherine slowly returned through the uplands to the Hall; and, on the latter remarking that no delicacy of feeling need prevent them that evening from seeking whatever preacher they might be curious to hear in the neighbourhood, Geraldine owned her intention not only to go herself, but also to carry off her friend Katherine, to the vesper service at the little Catholic chapel in Elverton. "This may be our only opportunity," said she, "of going quietly, without being missed and questioned. You can have no objection, surely, to hearing the Psalms and Magnificat chaunted in Latin, with a few hymns; for you will escape, in the evening service, what you persist in thinking 'the idolatry of the mass!' Come, my dear Katherine, come and judge for yourself of part of the public worship of these 'self-righteous Catholics!' I have a book of vespers with the translation, and we will both put on our close garden bonnets and veils."

"But people will certainly discover us to be Protestants," said Katherine, "from the awkwardness of our behaviour. I shall not in the least know when to sit, or when to stand, and as for kneeling, I shall dread to do it."

"Cannot you do as you see me do?" said Geraldine, "for I shall watch the little boys in the surplices."

"Ah! I can scarcely trust *you*," replied Katherine, "and, if they begin singing to the Virgin, I shall not wish to accord with them even in position."

"But I will promise to give you honourable notice," said Geraldine; and she continued to plead so hard with her friend, that, in the end, Katherine yielded; and, having equipped themselves as soberly as possible, they bent their steps, at the usual hour, namely three o'clock, to the narrow lane at the outskirts of the town, where, in a row of mean and dilapidated houses, stood the humble chapel, unadorned even by a cross.

Long before she had taken any personal interest in Catholicity, Geraldine had attended the vesper service at the various chapels of the foreign embassies in London, for the sake of the music, and, at that time, had procured a book, which enabled her to follow the priest and choir with great facility; and although the commemorations and vigils of saints' days make the vesper service rather complicated, yet this difficulty had been soon overcome by one, accustomed, in the Church of England prayer book, to seek for the accidental prayers at certain inter-

vals of the service. In the little chapel, however, which the two friends now entered, the Latin book of vespers was useless, for that universal language, so requisite in the mixed congregation of the foreign chapels, was here exchanged for the native tongue of a congregation exclusively English; and Geraldine, although a little disappointed to lose the remembered tones which she had now expected to associate with the sacred emotions of the heart, yet acknowledged the judicious care of the Catholic Church, which, in guarding from every innovation the awful ritual of the mass, yet permitted a discretionary freedom with respect to the other services, when the change might be deemed profitable to a congregation.

The two friends drew near the altar, and found places on a form, where a gentle, pleasing looking girl, gave them her book, pointing out to them, that the 'meditation,' which the priest had just commenced, was on the Gospel for the day, which was the tenth after Pentecost, consequently the ninth after Trinity, as it is entitled in the Common Prayer Book of the Church of England. The priest, kneeling with the two acolytes on the bottom step of the altar, thus read, in a low, but distinct and deeply impressive, voice:—

"This day's gospel is the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, who went up into the temple to pray; and being designed against those, who confide in themselves, and despise others, let us pray that God would mercifully deliver us from these inward indispositions, which are so very much displeasing to Him. Let us pray: O blessed Redeemer, who camest upon earth to be our physician, to heal all our infirmities, and on so many occasions hast laid before us the danger of our distempers, and the certain method of our cure, mercifully have regard to us this day, and grant we may receive the benefit of what Thou hast taught us in this day's instruction: Amen."

As the priest continued, Geraldine, still bearing in mind Katherine's accusation against the Catholics' doctrine, as inculcating 'self-righteousness,' gently pressed her friend's hand at the following words:—"Thou hast plainly shown us, that nothing can be more destructive to us, than to confide in ourselves, to presume upon our own works, and to despise others as being inferior to us. Thou hast positively assured us, that this alone is enough to make void whatever good we do, and, in the midst of a well disciplined and exemplary life, to be hateful in the sight of God."

Answer: " Mercifully have regard to us, therefore, O merciful God, and grant we may receive the benefit of what Thou hast taught us in this day's instruction."

Priest: " O blessed Jesus! since Thou hast been thus plain in discovering to us the malignity of this self-confidence, presumption, and pride, grant we may be afraid of these evils, and with horror start at the first thought of them, as at the approach of an infernal monster."

Answer: " For what are we, O Lord, that we should place any confidence in ourselves, or be proud of anything we do?"

Priest: " We have every day convictions of our own weakness, of our blindness, of our corruptions, indiscretions, and manifest follies; we see ourselves every day running into variety of evils, and that whatever we propose, it is with so little effect, that there is not one hour of our lives but we are evidently put in mind of our misery, and that of ourselves we can do nothing that is good!"

Answer: " Who are we then, O God, that we should place any confidence in ourselves, or be proud of anything we do?"

Priest: " If we think aright, it is thy gift to us; if we propose what is good, it is thy light which directeth us. If we avoid evil, it is thy grace that strengtheneth us: if we do what is just, it is thy mercy that enableth us: if we bear troubles with patience, it is thy gift that supporteth us. But if we think on what is evil, this, O God, is from ourselves."

Answer: " All our help, therefore, is from Thee, O Lord, and all our confidence must be in Thee."

Priest: " Hence, O God, as for any good we have at any time done, we now bow down and acknowledge that thou oughtest to be glorified, and not we to be esteemed, for it. For all hath been thy power and grace working in us, poor and helpless sinners."

Answer: " Glory and thanksgiving be rendered unto Thee, O God, who showest Thy power in such weak vessels."

Priest: " But as for us, we have reason to fear, and to be humbled, to see ourselves so extremely miserable, as even to be in great danger of offending the hand that helpeth us, and of prostituting that to self-love, which is designed for the purchase of everlasting glory."

In this strain did the Litany continue, through several more

petitions, and heartfelt acknowledgments of sin, the priest concluding with this prayer, which is also used in the Church of England:—"O God, who manifesteth thine Almighty power in pardoning chiefly, and showing mercy, multiply thy goodness towards us, that, having recourse to Thy promises, we may be partakers of Thine everlasting happiness, through the Lord Jesus Christ thy Son."

The congregation then arose, and the little choir began a hymn, apparently familiar to all around, as, without book, they joined, in a lower tone, with the voices which led this part of the service. Katherine, who had risen with the rest, now reseated herself, fearful that, however unexceptionable she had found the humble and devotional prayers, this hymn might turn out to be idolatrous. Their civil young neighbour, however, having placed in Katherine's hand the little book of hymns, the latter, glancing her eye over the one pointed out to her, again rose. It was that hymn, dear to the heart of every devout Catholic, from the pen of St Bernard, 'Jesu dulcis Memorix;' translated thus:—

"Jesus! the only thought of Thee,
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far it were to see,
And on thy beauty feast.

"No sound, no harmony so gay,
Can art or music frame;
No thoughts can reach, no words can say
The sweets of thy blest name.

"Jesus! our hope when we repent,
Sweet source of all our grace,
Sole comfort in our banishment,
Oh! what when face to face!

* * * *

"Come then, dear Lord, possess my heart,
Chace thence the shades of night,
Come pierce it with thy flaming dart,
And ever shining light."

These four verses only of the abridgment were sung, after which, all again kneeling, the priest said,—“Let us give thanks to Almighty God for the various benefits we have received from Him during the past week:” and a beautiful Litany followed. The most striking novelty, however, both to Geraldine and Katherine, was the long and solemn pause which followed these words,—“Let us carefully examine our consciences, and endeav-

our to recollect the sins we may have been guilty of, by thought, word, deed, or omission;—let us conceive a great sorrow for having offended God.” This pause, to our two friends, seemed endless, yet not a head was raised, not a sound was heard,—till, at length, the solemn tones of the priest continued: “Behold, O God, we here prostrate ourselves before Thee, in humble acknowledgment of all our sins. We confess to Thee our iniquities, our ingratitude, our general abuse of thy blessings, and our daily neglect of whatever hath belonged to thy service.”

Answer: “We prostrate ourselves before Thee, O God, in the humble acknowledgment of all our sins.”

In this strain did the second Litany continue, followed by supplications for the grace of God during the coming week, the latter part being taken wholly from Scripture. Then followed petitions for the pastors of the Church, for the king and royal family, and for the English nation, concluding thus:—“Lastly, we beseech Thee, Oh! Father of mercies, that thy saving truth may be received throughout the whole world; that all nations may be united in one fold, and that all may join with one mind, and with one voice, in glorifying God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Answer: “Hear us, O God, and in thy mercy grant our petitions. Give ear, oh! merciful God, to these our prayers, and graciously vouchsafe to grant our requests, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Priest: “May the blessed Virgin Mary, and all the saints, be our intercessors with the Lord, that we may be succoured and secured by Him, who liveth and reigneth to everlasting ages: Amen. And may the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace: Amen.”

Here all again rose to sing: but Katherine quickly sate down on hearing the first words of the ‘Ave Maris Stella.’

“Hail! thou resplendent star,
Which shineth o’er the main;
Blest Mother of our God,
And ever Virgin Queen.

“Hail! happy gate of bliss,
Greeted by Gabriel’s tongue,
Negotiate our peace,
And cancel Eva’s wrong.

“Exert thy Mother’s care,
And us thy children own;
To Him convey our prayer,
Who chose to be thy Son.

" Praise to the Father be,
With Christ His only Son,
And to the Holy Ghost.
Thrice blessed three in one."

" Amen."

At the conclusion of this last hymn, the Blessing was given, and many of the congregation, after a decent pause, arose to depart: Katherine and Geraldine also prepared to leave the chapel, but, perceiving that a troop of boys and girls were advancing to the rails of the altar, they remained to hear, for the first time, a public explanation of the Catholic Catechism. To Geraldine, who had now deeply studied every part of the Catholic doctrine, this unexpected addition to their instruction was still more interesting on Katherine's account than on her own, and she listened, therefore, with double pleasure, to every thing likely to prove the holiness of that faith, to which she was in heart attached.

" Well ! my dear friend," said Katherine, as the two friends returned in the deepening twilight to the Hall, " you expect me to acknowledge that I was both surprised and gratified ; and I will not obstinately refuse to make this avowal. Had that devout-looking man uttered extempore the prayers we listened to, I should merely have given him individually credit for being an exception to the mass of self-righteous papists ; but when I read in their book of public devotion, those clear convictions of sin, and their trust in Christ alone for sanctification, I began to think that I had indeed allowed myself to condemn their faith on that point too hastily..... The first hymn, too, was beautiful ; but what a pity that all was spoiled at the end, by the Virgin and saints !"

Geraldine, who, to own the truth, had secretly feared, during the service, lest *her friends* might utter something far more offensive to Protestant ears, than what had really occurred, was in high spirits, and came readily to the defence of all that had been said or sung, as warranted by the testimony of history, to be the belief of the primitive Church, testified by the writings of the early divines, and as most consonant with the benevolent and social feelings of the human heart.

" Oh ! dearest Katherine," cried she, " what can be more like a foretaste of the universal reign of Christ, than to join the glorified Church in prayer and praise ? what more touching, to

hearts ever craving for sympathy, than to feel this perfect 'communion of saints !' "

"It might, as you say, be very delightful to the natural feelings," returned Katherine, "were it but true ! but until that be proved, I shall be contented to pray for myself, feeling the deepest sense of my coldness, my wanderings, my utter unworthiness to be heard, but still trusting to Him, who is touched by my infirmities, and who will never reject the prayer of a sinner.

' Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling,
Naked come to Thee for dress,
Helpless look to Thee for grace :
Rock of ages rent for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.' "

"Katherine," said Geraldine earnestly, "you have witnessed this evening how Christ our adorable Lord and Master, is the life, the hope, the centre, of Catholic worship ; the well-known and beautiful hymn you have just repeated, does not convey this more than the one we first heard in the chapel ; and what could surpass, or even equal, that contrite Litany ?"

"It was beautiful," said Katherine, "I have told you so already, and it required no additional prayer to the Virgin : for when we have the privilege of access to the Father through the all-sufficient merits of the Son, why trust to, or care for, such inferior assistance as that of the prayers of saints and angels ?—When Christ maketh intercession for us, what need we more ?"

"Then why do *you* pray ?" said Geraldine ; "what can your poor thoughts and words avail, when He, who is at once God, to grant, and Man, to plead, prays for you ? Do you not, by the very act of prayer, suppose an insufficiency in the intercession of Christ ?"

Katherine paused, and at length said,—“Certainly, were we to trust to our own reason on the subject, we should fear to intrude our imperfect and often guilty petitions on the throne of grace. We should, as you say, deem it an acknowledgment that the intercession of our High Priest was not all-sufficient—and shrink from the blasphemous conclusion. But we are not authorized in trusting to our weak judgment on this or on any subject, where the Bible calls on us simply to obey. We are told, it is true, that Christ maketh continual intercession for us, which, indeed, seems all-sufficient : but we are also told to ‘pray

always,' doubtless to keep us in continual mindfulness of our dependance on God for all things."

"Then, your objection to the intercessory prayers of our deceased brethren whom we believe to have been raised to glory, arises not, after all, from the usual plea, that they are unnecessary, if not presumptuous, when Christ our intercessor is sufficient for us, but from the belief that you are a far greater favourite with God than the 'just made perfect,' and that the supplications of that pure creature, whom the Holy Ghost thrice pronounced 'Blessed,' the chosen Mother of your God, are held as nought, compared with those of Katherine Graham!"

"You are severe, Geraldine," replied Miss Graham.

"No, Katherine, I only want you to perceive, that prejudice, and not reason, makes you reject the prayers of others, from a dread of encroaching on the intercession of Christ, when you do not dread this with your own prayers. You must, therefore, suppose a greater efficacy to attend the latter; but why?"

"Why, because," replied Katherine, "the Bible commands one, and says not one word about the other."

"Pardon me," replied Geraldine, "the Bible says a great deal, both plainly and by implication, respecting our prayers for each other: for instance, the great apostle, who was favoured with the assurance of being a Vessel of Election, yet disdained not to entreat the prayers of the Church at Rome."

"Ah!" said Katherine, hastily, "they were his brethren still in the flesh, there was no superstition to be dreaded there."

"Then," said Geraldine, smiling, "the benefit or danger of intercessory prayer, after all, depends on our body of corruption, our frail and perishable flesh; so that mind may commune with mind, spirit sympathize with spirit, so long as both are encumbered with matter; but directly that one of the two is freed from these fetters, all commune and sympathy must stop, as superstitious, and dangerous, and derogatory to the perfect mediation of Christ!"

Katherine Graham, not having, as usual, an answer to give, was grave and silent, and, on arriving at the Hall, the friends parted.

CHAPTER XVII.

If stubborn Greek refuse to be his friend,
 Hebrew or Syriac shall be forced to bend :
 If languages and copies all cry " No !"
 Somebody proved it centuries ago.

Cowper.

A FEW days after this Sunday evening's excursion, which, notwithstanding all her precautions, had not been effected with all the secrecy she supposed, Geraldine again sought Mr Everard, informing him that she was in a fresh controversial difficulty, and had come to him as usual, for assistance. " I must first tell you, my dear Sir," said she smiling, " that I wrote, some time ago, what *I* consider a very able essay, to prove, from Scripture and from history, that the Papacy was not antichrist. This paper, in the exultation of my heart, I showed to my uncle, a day or two before he went away, and what think you he said ?"

" He said that you had wasted your time," replied Mr Everard.

" Exactly so ! His reply was, ' What sensible Protestant ever said that the Pope or Papacy was antichrist ? Your essay is well enough, but a victory over shadows is but a poor feat. You must not judge of the Protestant cause by the folly of some of its members. Protestants, as well as Papists, may sometimes write or say foolish things ; but you must go to the learned and accredited Fathers of the English Church for your Protestantism, not to all those modern writers and speakers, who soon get beyond their depth in argument, and endanger the cause they pretend to support ! ' "

" Well !" said Mr Everard, " and why does the good sense and candour of this reply cause you any difficulty ?"

" Because this very good sense and candour are completely at variance with the authorities to which he bids me listen. Just come to this table, on which I have collected all the books to which he refers me, and have marked the passages which treat of the subject in question. Look here," added she, opening an old volume containing the writings of Bishop Jewel,—" ' Thus we have seen who shall be *antichrist*, and in what Church he shall be : that he shall be a bishop, and shall be stalled or placed in Rome.'

" Then again," said Geraldine,—" ' The *Man of Sin*, and his errors, are revealed ; men see and know, and detest the blindness wherein they were led : the people forsake him over-

and over the world. Antichrist shall sit in Peter's chair, and Rome shall be the seat of his kingdom.'

"Now then for the Homily,—'So that laity and clergy, learned and unlearned, all ages, and sects, and degrees of men, women, and children, of whole Christendom, a horrible and most dreadful thing to think, have been at once drowned in abominable idolatry, of all other vices the most detested of God, and most damnable to man, and that by the space of eight hundred years and more!'"

"Well done Homily," cried Mr Everard; "and here I see you have opened its title-deed in the thirty-fifth article of the Church of England."

"The second book of Homilies, the several titles whereof we have joined under this article, doth contain a godly and wholesome doctrine, and necessary for these times, as doth the former book of Homilies, set forth in the time of Edward the Sixth, and therefore, we judge them to be read in churches by the ministers diligently and distinctly, that they may be understood of the people.'

"Stay, you must read just one thing more," said Geraldine, "it is an extract from your favourite Coleridge:—'If the Papacy, and the Romish Hierarchy, so far as it is Papal, be *not* antichrist, the guilt of schism, in its most aggravated form, lies on the authors of the Reformation. For nothing less than this could have justified so tremendous a rent in the Catholic Church, with all its foreseen most calamitous consequences; and so thought Luther himself, and so thought Wickliffe before him.'

"True! very true," said Mr Everard; "and now show me your essay."

"I have mislaid it somewhere among my books," said Geraldine; "but my chief argument was drawn from the explicit declaration, given by St John, of that twofold heresy which, he tells us, is the spirit of antichrist, the one denying the divinity of Christ, the other his humanity. 'This is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son,' 1 *John* ii. 22; and then,—'For many deceivers have entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh; this is a deceiver and an antichrist.' *John, Epis.* ii. 7.—'and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.' 1 *John* iv. 1—3. Can any thing be plainer than that the mysterious union of God and man, in the person of our blessed Lord, was an exercise of faith be

yona the reception of those who would not submit to the inspired teaching of the Apostles? The Arians denied the divinity—the Gnostics and Manicheans the humanity of Christ, declaring that he took on him only the semblance of man, and only *seemed* to die on the cross.”

“Perfectly correct,” said Mr Everard; “and did you prove from history, that these two heresies tormented the Church almost equally during the early centuries?”

“Yes! I had found from Mosheim, that the Apostle’s warning was quite fulfilled; and now, is it not perfectly astonishing, that the Catholic Church should be accused of being antichrist, when it was she alone (for there was then no other semblance of a Church), she alone who pronounced on, and condemned, these antichristian heresies? what Pope ever denied the divinity or humanity of Christ? And the attempt to fasten on that office the odious title and characteristic of antichrist, is so wicked, as well as foolish, that I cannot tell which is the most glaring!”

“I like to see you properly worked up to one of your fits of indignation,” said the old gentleman, leaning back in a chair, and complacently smiling at Geraldine.

“I wish that I were only indignant,” replied she; “but I am equally alarmed and saddened, at the never-ending contradictions of the best and wisest Protestants.”

“Perhaps amongst the various calumnies which you are now enabled to refute,” said Mr Everard, “may be that of the Catholic Church forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats?”

“Yes,” said Geraldine, “Protestant history has enabled me to fix this upon the Gnostics and Manicheans, under which last designation that sect, who abolished marriage, and condemned the use of any creature, as food, which had had life, continued to disturb the Catholic Church during nine centuries; but these absurdities were never charged on the Catholic Church, which had pronounced on and condemned them; that Church which elevates marriage to a sacrament,—till calumny, falsehood, and, in short, the whole of Pandora’s box, was opened at the Reformation!”

“Hear! hear!” cried Mr Everard. “Why, Geraldine, I think I must give you a new book to calm you.”

“A new book!” cried she eagerly, “by whom?”

"By Milner, and called the 'End of Controversy.'"

"Oh—Milner!" said she, much disappointed; "I have had enough of Milner, in his suspecting the 'clear views' of the apostles!"

But this is not by Joseph Milner, the Calvinist; it is by the Catholic Dr Milner, late Vicar Apostolic of the Midland District," said Mr Everard, drawing a sturdy little book from his pocket.

"A new Catholic book! what a treasure!" cried Geraldine, as she took it eagerly from Mr Everard's extended hand. "'The end of controversy!' Well, God grant it may be so to me! I thank you, my kind friend. Oh, what a number of interesting points the author dwells upon.—'Miracles, the criterion of truth—appealed to by Christ,' &c.—Exactly the subject I want; but I must first see whether Dr Milner says any thing about antichrist."

"You had better look into the alphabetical index," said Mr Everard.

"Here is nearly a chapter, or rather a letter, on the subject," at length said Geraldine, and she read for some time in silence, with only the occasional remark of "Very true!" "Very well said!" till, at length, she read aloud:—"The second character of antichrist, set down by Saint Paul, is, that 'he opposeth and is lifted up above all that is called God.' This character, Mr Benson and Archbishop Watson think applicable to the Pope, who, they say, claims the attributes and homage due to the Deity. I leave you, reverend Sir, and your friends, to judge of the truth of this character, when I inform you that the Pope has his confessor, like other Catholics, to whom he confesses his sins in private; and that every day, in saying mass, he bows before the altar, and, in presence of the people, confesses that he has 'sinned in thought, word, and deed,' begging them to pray to God for him; and that afterwards, in the most solemn part of the service, he professes his hopes of forgiveness, not through his own merits, but through the bounty and grace of Jesus Christ our Lord. **

"You will find no *Protestant head* of a Church going through such acts of humility," observed Mr Everard. "It is seldom that a cardinal is elevated to the chief pastorship, before he is advanced in years and experience. We find this hoary head,

* Canon of the Mass.

bending in humility and contrition, in the private tribunal of confession, at the feet of a fellow priest, probably his junior, probably his inferior in talent as in station, and from him receiving the delegated absolution. We find this same aged man, in the presence of his flock, thrice striking upon his breast, and declaring *aloud*, 'I have sinned exceedingly, in thought, word, and deed, through my fault—my most exceeding fault!'"

"Yes," added Geraldine; "and then his begging for the prayers of his people; and avowing that his hopes of forgiveness rest solely on the bounty and grace of his Lord Jesus Christ! Mr Everard! Mr Everard! this is the daily public declaration of the head of the Catholic Church; and the Protestant reformers *dared* to say, that he 'opposeth and setteth himself up above all that is called God,' and to call him antichrist! Could they plead ignorance, when, having been Catholics, they knew those services and sacramental obligations by heart? 'Oh, what shall be done unto thee, or what reward shall be given unto thee, *thou false tongue!*'"

CHAPTER XVIII.

Tho' Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, holy chiefs,
Have made a battle-royal of beliefs,
Or, like wild horses, several ways have whirl'd
The tortured text about the Christian world.

Dryden.

"GERALDINE!" said Katherine Graham, some days after this conversation, when, having returned from a walk with Mr Everard, she found her friend still surrounded by books and papers; "Geraldine! how long do you intend to keep up this mad search after perfection,—hunting after it in vain through the Protestant communities, and now, alas! tempted to rush into that ensnaring Church, from which the victim cannot escape, but through an ordeal of spiritual anathema enough to daunt the stoutest heart? Why be so much dissatisfied with your own Church, because you find that she differs from the primitive Christians? God knows, I am not particularly attached to your 'venerable Establishment!' but never should I dream of leaving her, because she was unlike a set of people just emerging from Judaism or idolatry, whose minds were evidently in a great state of confusion from the rebukes given them in Paul's Epistles."

“Then why does she claim affinity in doctrine and practice?” said Geraldine; “why does she carry on a perpetual warfare between the spirit and the letter of her faith? why hold out that which she is ashamed to fulfil?—Oh, Katherine, she is full of cowardice, and therefore full of deception. She is a beautiful delusion—alluring, then deceiving, the soul.”

“Why, I told the Warden all this myself, which I am sure was bold enough,” cried Katherine: “but you were then as indignant with me for it as he was.”

“Alas!” continued Geraldine, “a member of the Church of England knows not what to think. He has the whole Bible put into his hands, and is repeatedly told that the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants. Accordingly, it often happens that a sincere and pious man, after much study and prayer, is led to form for himself a rule of faith, according to his view of God’s will and his own obligations. But no! this must not be permitted; for this man is a ‘member of the Church,’ his opinions are shown by his fellows to be far from orthodox, according to the standard of the thirty-nine articles, and the authority of the Church is proved to him from the very Bible he holds in his hand; so, being a humble and candid man, he perceives and acknowledges the express command of Christ to hear his ministers, and he turns to the rule of faith laid down by his divinely appointed Church. He reads, and ponders over the ‘Articles,’ and discovers, by their express declaration, that they do not claim divine inspiration, and only insist on being obeyed as far as they follow Scripture. Who, then, is to be judge of their conformity to Scripture? Himself? Then he is made dictator to that very Church which his Bible tells him implicitly to obey! What a state of confusion and contradiction for his mind to be in! Some relief is then offered him, in the statement, that, although the founders of the English Church cannot claim the guidance of the Holy Ghost to decide the obscure points of faith in Scripture, yet they believe that this assistance was vouchsafed to the Christian Church in the early centuries, and therefore they receive its decisions as infallible. The member of the Church of England, much comforted, then turns to the infallible interpretation of the early Church, and finds himself, as it were, in a new world, amongst a set of doctrines and opinions, so different from those of the Church of England, that, after this, peep into antiquity, the poor bewildered man either consents to remain in the vague

supposition that the Church of England, though she has cheated him, is just as likely to be right as any other Church, or he mentally wanders from creed to creed, or he banishes the subject altogether from his mind—or what is left for him now, Katherine?—he becomes a Catholic;—and, what is more, he remains one!”

“ You, Geraldine, remain a Catholic! With your understanding, aye! and pride of understanding too—with your habits, like my own, of independent thought and action! You can never remain in such a silly pompous Church!”

“ Yes I can,” said Geraldine smiling; “ I can submit to authority, when once I trace it from a divine source. You have often said of me, partly in jest, perhaps, that in married life I should struggle for supremacy: but the time may come when I shall prove your double mistake, by acting on the same one principle. For, as I hold the submission of a wife to her husband to be of divine appointment, you would see me yield willingly, cheerfully—with this all-important proviso, that I do not marry a madman or a fool! In the same spirit of obedience on conviction, I consent to obey a Church which is to me as the voice of God; for having once submitted to the proofs given me of the divine nature of her authority, I yield—and in this case without any proviso—for, in marriage, even a sensible man may be at times capricious; but the voice of the Church, having once spoken, changes not.”

“ You speak here of her dogmas; but ah! remember the corruptions of her discipline, of her practice: think of the deceit, the tyranny, the immoralities of priestcraft!”

“ Dear Katherine, I have, during the sleepless nights of the last month, gone through nearly a brain fever on this very subject. The dread of being irrevocably enthralled, like ‘Zulica,’ in the ‘Veiled Prophet;’ the terror inspired by the Papist’ dealings with the unseen world; their crossings, their Latin, and their secret prayers; with all the horrors of Protestant tradition, rush upon me, and I gasp, and stare around, exclaiming, ‘there is yet escape.’”

“ And why, then, do you not take warning by this merciful impression on your mind?” said Miss Graham; “ this conviction, even at the last hour of the rash step you are about to take—this God-send to you—ill as you deserve it!”

“ Because these impressions are *not* convictions,” returned

Geraldine ; "and I look upon them to be any thing but God-sent : they are rather devil-sent, and will not stand the ' Ithuriel spear of truth.'"

" Truth !" exclaimed Katherine impatiently, "all the world cants about truth, each one laying claim to it."

" There, Katherine, we are quite agreed ; but I divide the Protestant seekers after truth into three classes. The first follow Pilate, and, having asked ' what is truth ?' are content to let it rest in doubt for ever ; while the second investigate for the purpose of confirming themselves in every thing they had previously thought, and

' Compound for *truths* they are inclined to,
' Denying those they have no mind to.' "

" A very pretty lady-like way of quoting Hudibras," said Katherine laughing, "and now for your third class?"

" My third class," continued Geraldine, "are they who are honestly determined to follow the truth, even though, like the Jew, they find it 'a stumbling-block,' and like the Greek, 'foolishness ;' and against both these obstacles has the Protestant to struggle in his conformity to the Catholic Church."

" Geraldine !" cried her friend, "you cannot surely all at once change the whole bent of your thoughts and opinions ! You cannot adopt, without repugnance of feeling, all those outward forms, and internal persuasions, which you have ever been taught to esteem false and pernicious?"

" I tell you that it is a struggle, Katherine.—The first time I made the sign of the cross, I trembled as though I were binding myself to some incantation. I cannot yet invoke any saint, still less the Virgin Mother of my God, without a rush of previous misconception encircling and obscuring the truth I would hold ; and I am still bewildered and terrified on the subject of plenary indulgences, from the notion instilled into me all my life, that 'indulgence was leave to commit sin.' Nay more, I confess to several things, which, even when explained, I can neither admire nor approve !"

" What infatuation !" exclaimed Miss Graham, "to enter a Church in which there are things you can neither admire nor approve."

" Now, Katherine," replied Geraldine, "confess to me with your usual integrity, would it not be far greater infatuation to admit, as I do, the Divine authority of Christ's One Church,

and then to deny the several points of faith which did not suit me? This would be, this *is*, the conduct of nine-tenths of the members of the Church of England, who idolize their Church as a whole, and disobey *on principle* half her commands. But this inconsistency, this 'infatuation,' can never be found with the believers of 'infallibility.'"

"I will answer you honestly," replied Katherine, "not because you call upon me to do so, but because I never have any other mode of answering anybody; and I will say, that, if you can once bring your mind to believe in the infallibility of a Church, you are right to obey her, or, in other words, you begin with a folly, and are consistent in your folly!"

"Nay," replied Geraldine, "call me mad at once; for the character of madness is to reason correctly on false premises; but remember, Katherine, that I have as much cause to wonder at you, as you have to hold up your hands and eyes at me; for you had not an answer to give my uncle at the close of his arguments in favour of a visible and divinely appointed Church, possessing authority to decide on points of faith; and yet you seem to be just as contented to disbelieve this, as before he advanced anything on the subject, which is to me incomprehensible."

"My dear Geraldine," replied Miss Graham, "I was brought up, thank heaven, with the Bible for my sole guide; and I want no Church to explain truths, which those who run may read."

"They run and they read, Katherine, but into how many paths do they wander, whose sole guide is the mere letter of Scripture, which indeed killeth, while the spirit alone giveth life. To use your own word, it is 'infatuation' to persist in thinking, that merely reading the Sacred Scriptures will impart to you the whole and wonderful scheme of God's dealings with His creatures."

"Then, pray," said Katherine, "why are the Bereans so much commended for 'searching' in the Scriptures 'whether those things were so,' which the Apostle had told them; and why is Timothy congratulated that, from a child, he had known the Holy Scriptures, which were able to make him 'wise unto salvation?'"

"With respect to Timothy, I should say," replied Geraldine, "that he had possessed that great advantage under due subordination to his Jewish teachers, who were the divinely appointed interpreters of the Law and the Prophets; for do not suppose

that I think less than you do of the high privilege of Scriptural knowledge, not for the purpose of waging war with opposition of text, but to 'ponder these things in my heart,' as did the humble holy Mary."

"Well! but now for the Bereans, Geraldine; how can you get over that commendation of their proving from Scripture those things, which even an inspired Apostle assured them 'were so?'"

"I cannot explain that text," said Geraldine, with her usual candour. "I think it all on your side of the argument: I can only give you its opponent passage, in the inquiry of Philip to the Ethiopian, when reading the Scriptures, 'Understandest thou what thou readest?*' and the answer, 'How can I, unless some man show me!' But, Katherine, are you really so deceived, as to imagine that you have from a child taken your faith simply from the Bible, unbiassed by human opinion? Did you never learn your catechism, never listen to the pious conversation of your family, never hear a sermon? What boy or girl ever forms a creed but from some bias given by others? If ever I wrote an essay it should be on Self-deception, as connected with religious liberty."

"As a child," replied Katherine, "I own that my impressions must have been derived from those of others. They could not be original, and how far they may have prevented the free admission of other sentiments in after-life I cannot perhaps tell; but, of course, I consider my own mind to be just and candid, and I have this assurance of thinking rightly, that, of late years, I have sat under a gospel ministry."

"Ah!" cried Geraldine, "are you not yet aware, that what is termed preaching the gospel, means preaching the Epistles? Do you not observe, that if Christ gives a simple command, or a simple promise,—a deep explanation, to prove that He meant just the reverse of what He said, is to be given from St Paul? That the Epistles even are only valuable, inasmuch as they contain the eighth and part of the seventh chapter to the Romans, to which every other epistle, and all the four gospels, are made to bend? that, while these modern expounders talk of 'liberty,' they fasten you down with innumerable petty ligatures, like Gulliver among the Lilliputians, so that it is in vain you would comfort yourself that the Brobdingnag chain of infallibility is far

distant, while you can stir neither hand nor foot under the glorious control of fifty tyrants instead of one !”

“ Then,” said Katherine laughing, “ you intend to become a Catholic on the same plea which last year made you advise me to marry ?”

“ Exactly so,” replied Geraldine, in the same tone of mirth ; “ You had three aunts, a grandmother, and cousins innumerable, all advising and directing, and blaming you by turns ; and when you spoke one day, in self-delusion, on the liberty of your single state, I merely advised you to compromise for one tyrant instead of many !”

CHAPTER XIX.

A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller 'twixt life and death ;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill :
A perfect woman, nobly planned
To warn, to comfort, and command.
And yet a spirit still and bright,
With something of an angel light.

Wordsworth.

AT this part of the conversation, Mr Everard joined the two friends, and, much pleased to find them both laughing, inquired the subject, which when told, “ Ah !” said he, “ à-propos of marriage, I have not forgotten, Geraldine, my promise to introduce to you the one good clergyman's wife of my acquaintance — the Protestant Sister of Charity, the ‘ Reverend Mother’ of her little parish. When shall we drive across the heath to see her ?”

“ Oh ! I should indeed enjoy it,” said Geraldine eagerly, “ I should like a holiday from all thought and care : when shall we go ?”

“ Why, any day you like, unless, which would be perhaps better, I write first to my friend, the good vicar, and tell him that you pay him the compliment of letting him fix the day, his time being more occupied than ours.”

Accordingly it was thus arranged, and, on an early day in the following week, the two ladies, with Mr Everard, in the open barouche, traversed rapidly and gaily the twelve miles of cross country road, and, at two o'clock, arrived by appointment at the Vicarage gate of Charleton. Geraldine had been given a sketch of the inmates in greater detail by Mr Everard, as they had

drawn near the spot, and had listened with great interest to his account of the early attachment of that congenial pair—their struggles to conquer an affection which poverty seemed to forbid—the vicar's success at College—the subsequent patronage of a noble and grateful pupil—the gift of this living of Charleton—and the renewal of vows which principle had obliged them to annul. Mr Everard's intimacy with the inmates and guests of the vicarage made the introduction easy, and no formality was permitted to waste the precious moments of a day, from which all, and especially Geraldine, had promised themselves so much pleasure: and while with affectionate respect she conversed at once freely with the mild yet cheerful being of whom she had heard so much, the vicar's wife, on her part, had no unworthy misgivings that the elegant and accomplished heiress, of whom fame spoke so loudly, would despise her unfashionable dress, and her one rosy maid. Calm in the perfect dignity of simplicity, Mrs Forester gratified Geraldine's wish to show and explain all her plans for the good of the flock over which her husband presided, and she led the way, first to her little dispensary, where Geraldine perceived, on a slate, a list of sick persons, with memoranda of their respective wants, while shelves and drawers filled one side of the room. After some conversation respecting the best method of relieving the sick poor, the visitors turned to the other side of the room, where was ranged the Village Library; and, after observing for some time in silence the various titles of the works, Miss Graham exclaimed, "What a well-thumbed 'Robinson Crusoe!' and these other soiled books too, what are they?—more novels?"

Mrs Forester smiled, and replied, "Some are lives of British worthies, some are simple tales of fiction, chiefly by Hannah More, in which the Christian duties are inculcated, but in which all controversy is carefully excluded."

"I observe," said Geraldine, "that books of devotion and of biography, seem, with these little pious tales, to constitute your Village Library; and I look in vain for the periodicals of the Tract Society, which I had supposed to be published expressly for the lower orders."

"We do not admit them," replied Mrs Forester, "for they are written in a wrangling spirit, and Mr Forester objects to them also, as being one of the means by which his Church is being undermined. But I believe that the orthodox Church

party are now publishing tracts to counteract the levelling and dissenting tendency of the Tract Society."

"Ah! poor old state barge!" cried Miss Graham, "just heaving on, when all is over!"

"I will leave this subject to you and Mr Forester," replied the wife mildly; and she now took them across the village green, to the Infant School, where, according to Mrs Forester's plan of not forcing the mind, the little creatures were made more happy than wise; and those, who were not jumping and laughing, were fast asleep on a large mattress at the end of the long room, till their mothers or elder sisters should call for them on their way home from the labours of the day. In the School of Industry, which the party next visited, Geraldine was introduced to the two little daughters of her new friend, who, having finished their appointed task, returned full of animation with their mother to the vicarage.

"And are you not afraid of vulgar associations for your little girls?" said Geraldine, in a low voice to Mrs Forester.

"I should be," replied she in the same tone, "were not strict silence preserved in the School of Industry; but, during the one hour which Ellen and Lucy pass there, nothing is heard but the chapter selected for the day, which each girl reads aloud in her turn, till, by mere repetition, and without any painful effort, the whole school has the chapter by heart."

"And I trust *in* the heart," added Geraldine.

"Ah! that must be the work of the Spirit," rejoined Mrs Forester. "We may plant and water, but God alone can give the increase. With respect to my two girls, whose simple Christian education has been my first duty, this one hour, of which I speak, is the only one during the day, in which they are parted from their father and myself; and I have arranged that this hour should be employed where the force of example and of emulation should supply the place of their parents."

On entering the vicarage gate, the ladies were met by the reverend owner and Mr Everard, and the whole party rested and conversed in the shade of an arbour overlooking a richly laden orchard, till the early dinner was announced by the two little girls, who had not only arranged the table and sideboard, but who also waited upon their parents and guests with all the self-possession and politeness of the truly humble.

This little scene was at once so novel, and so fraught with in

terest to Geraldine, that, for the time being, she fancied that she could willingly pass her days in that rural spot, where the purest affections, and the most heartfelt piety, were thus nourished by simplicity and humility. During a long conversation which followed, between Mr Forester and herself, Geraldine, with her usual interest in development of character, clearly traced, in the now softened and subdued vicar of Charleton, the natural disposition which had been described to her by Mr Everard, and which, in connexion with all that she had hitherto seen of Mrs Forester, tended to confirm her old friend's position, that, although in nine cases out of ten a wife is a snare and a stumbling-block to a clergyman, yet that redeeming instances were to be found, where she is the encourager and sustainer of all his better purposes.

The Rev. Granville Forester was the younger son of the younger branch of a noble family. Hereditary pride, the more closely fostered, because of the hereditary poverty which was equally his birthright, was to be surpassed only by a pride of character, which might break, but could not bend. Scarcely a trial awaited him during his brilliant career at the University, where success for a time cured all asperities; but the after-struggles with adversity again galled and fretted his haughty mind, and at length produced a ready-armed sensitiveness, which stood ever on the defensive. And when comparative prosperity shone at length on him, and from the perpetually mortified tutor, he became the pastor of an admiring flock, when the gentle and faithful being, whom in absence he had doubted, was proved to have loved and suffered for him alone, when all the softer influences of life were shed around him, still his habits of adversity clung to him, unknown to himself. Secluded in his study, his flock saw but little of him except in the pulpit; and there even the elegant and classical scholar was better suited to address the highly educated class amongst whom he had passed his life, than the simple congregation who felt their new vicar to be more wonderful than profitable. Then it was that the wife, by precept and example, effected that which no other being could have ventured to attempt—the fastidious and morbidly sensitive Mr Forester became, when she leaned on his arm, accessible to all classes of his parishioners. Not only the cottager, but the more *difficult* society of the tradesman and the squire, was first endured, and then sought; and this personal intercourse with beings

of whom he had hitherto known nothing—this acquaintance with human life in all its sympathies and vicissitudes—produced a change in his public discourses, which rendered them as useful as they were striking.

This sketch of what he had been, and was now become, to his flock, Mr Forester himself gave to Geraldine, adding, as he looked at his wife, “Under the grace of God, it is she who has wrought this change!”

“Well, ladies,” cried Mr Everard, as the party from the hall drove rapidly homeward, “what think you now of the celibacy of the clergy?”

“Oh, Mr Everard,” replied Geraldine, “ever since I have seen Mrs Forester, I have been indulging in schemes as daring as those of your Utopia. I should now like the clergy to marry; but I should stipulate that they confined their choice to a certain class of young persons, who should be trained to all the duties required in the reponsible situation they are to fill; that in the species of convent, in which these girls should be educated, no accomplishments should be taught except music, and that wholly sacred; that in their mental tuition the greatest love and reverence should be inspired for the sacred ministry; and that they should learn to consider themselves not only high favoured in being chosen helpmates for the clergy, but also bound in sacred obligation to prove such by their docility, their activity, their charity, and all that we have to-day witnessed in Mrs Forester.”

“Ah! she is a nonpareil,” said Mr Everard; “but remember, in your schemes, that our clergy are of every rank, from the nobleman to the peasant; and that an elegant and accomplished man, who continues, although in the priesthood, to move in the circles to which he was born, and who would conscientiously employ those very talents to the glory of God,—that man would scarcely feel that he had a helpmate in the humble creature you would introduce to him.”

“And why not?” rejoined Geraldine. “A clergyman, however high-born and highly gifted, if he be truly a pastor to his flock, can never esteem these adventitious possessions but as secondary to the one thing needful to which he is called. Besides, I do not wish to debar my *Reverend Ladies* from those mental accomplishments, and those mental graces, which would make them fit companions for princes.”

“Or for bishops,” said Mr Everard

"Oh, no! I cannot allow the bishops to have wives. I have a particular and rooted objection to that class of ladies, and think that their worldly and expensive career has been as fatal to our Right Reverend Fathers, as Peter-pence was to the See of Rome."

"Now, let me tell you, Geraldine, that you are unconsciously copying the discipline of a Church, which, in this and in many respects I admire, notwithstanding its frail and fallen state, namely, that of the Eastern Christian World. In the Greek Church, the secular clergy marry, from their own tribe as it were, namely, the daughters of the priesthood, who, as you propose, are brought up to a far more strict and retired life than the daughters of the laity, and who, from associating chiefly, if not entirely, with those of their own calling, have not a wish beyond."

"Then my scheme is not Utopian, after all," said Geraldine, "for here, you see, I have a precedent in the practical experience of the Greek Church."

"Yes; but with respect to the bishops, you will receive but feeble support from the Greek Church, for they are allowed 'one wife' during their life, and, owing to the prohibition they are under of ever wooing a successor, there is a Greek proverb illustrative of the superabundant felicity of a bishop's wife."

"But do they lead fashionable lives?" persisted Geraldine; "have they their Almacks and their operas? Do they speculate for their daughters, and corrupt their sons? Do they place their husbands in that awful dilemma of disunion from their wives, or infidelity to their God?"

"I think I can fairly reply, No!" said Mr Everard. "The same strict discipline which is exercised over the education of the families of the priesthood in general, would necessarily extend its influence over the wives of the superior clergy. The class, among the Greek clergy, who lead a stricter, and, as it is termed among them, a more 'perfect,' life, are the confessors; they have no earthly tie."

"Look at those bleak hills in the distant twilight," exclaimed Miss Graham, who had hitherto been silent; "and look at that dark range of fir against the still red sky. I have been gazing at those objects which speak to me of Scotland ever since we left Charleton; and, while you have been comparing the two corrupt and fallen Churches of England and Greece, I have been

carried back to the humble manse of the Scottish pastor, there to find all my sympathies and all my convictions confirmed in favour of simplicity."

"Well! well! I love Scotland, and Scotland's Kirk very much too; but observe this, Miss Graham, that for the Universal Church, which is to embrace all nations, all ranks, all dispositions, it is necessary to have in the priesthood men of different degrees of refinement and education. The pious and zealous body of Scottish clergy are taken almost exclusively from the lower ranks; the English clergy almost exclusively from the higher. I like nothing exclusive; neither did John Wesley, whose purpose was to form a body of underworkers to the more highly-educated clergy; and what a prize was lost to the English Church by the compulsory dissent of the Wesleyan Methodists! Men who have braved all dangers, all privations, to carry the Gospel tidings to their fellow-creatures, and who, in unwearied zeal as missionaries, are equalled by few, and excelled by none save the Jesuits!"

"Oh! Mr Everard, this is too much. Your philanthropy and liberality of feeling extend even beyond *my* comprehension!" exclaimed Geraldine.

"Because my knowledge and experience extend farther," quietly replied the old gentleman.

The carriage here stopped at an inn on the road, for the lamps to be lighted, and, after this interruption, the conversation turned on the various little occurrences of the day, till they drove into the avenue of Elverton.

CHAPTER XX.

Then, fainting soul, arise and sing,
Mount, but be sober on the wing;
Mount up, for heaven is won by prayer,
Be sober, for thou art not there.

Keeble.

AFTER many long and fruitless endeavours, on the part of Katherine, to prevent Geraldine's farther research into Catholic books of controversy or of devotion, a truce was tacitly agreed on between the friends, and each took her own course,—Katherine exercising the powers of her mind in the investigation of the various points of doctrine then agitating the Evangelical world, and feeding her interest in those discussions by the perusal of the 'Record' newspaper, 'The Christian Observer,' and other periodicals, sent her by zealous friends,—whilst Geraldine, having

determined that ignorance was a bad plea for remaining a Protestant, yet fearful of farther involving Mr Everard with her uncle by asking his opinion of the books to be procured, remained for some time contented with the three works, which, together with the catechism, formed the whole of her Catholic library, namely, the 'Faith of Catholics,' the 'Papist Misrepresented,' and the 'End of Controversy': till, suddenly calling to mind the old Missal discovered in the Abbey chapel, she claimed it from Mr Everard, anticipating a deep and continued interest in comparing the Roman Catholic service with that of the Church of England, in the Book of Common Prayer. A few minutes after she had quitted Mr Everard with the prize, and had seated herself at her writing table, with her Prayer-book and Missal spread open, side by side, before her, she was joined by her old friend, with another book in his hand. "Here, Geraldine," cried he, "are the Vespers and Litanies of the old Church, which, together with the Missal, will enable you to find the source whence is drawn the 'admirable Liturgy,' of those 'good Protestants,' to whom the very sight or sound of a popish book of prayers is an abomination."

"Will you not remain with me?" cried she, drawing a chair beside her own. "Do, if you have no better occupation, help me to trace our Church Service in the originals you have brought me! Now, tell me the cause of that deep sigh, Mr Everard," added she, as the old man turned away.

"Nothing, girl, nothing—at least, nothing new. . . . You look unusually like her who is gone to a better world,—that is all! and at those times, nay always, you may do what you please with me:" and he seated himself by Geraldine, and drew the two open books before him. "Now then for the Mass, and its Protestant translation," cried he. . . . "The Catholic Service of the Mass opens with the invocation of the Blessed Trinity, during which the priest and the congregation make the sign of the cross: this invocation and sign is omitted in the Protestant service."

"Then follow, in both rituals, verses taken from Scripture, equally humble, and contrite, and beautiful; but the Catholic selection, referring to the awful sacrifice which is the very soul and essence of the Service, has been changed by the Protestant compilers to texts of more general import."

"Next follows, in the Missal, the confession of the priest, lowly kneeling before the altar, and thrice striking his breast, while the

clerk, in the name of the people, implores mercy on him. This is omitted in the Protestant service."

"Next follows, in both rituals, the 'general confession,' with this difference, that, while the Catholics, with St Paul, confess before Almighty God, his angels, and just men made perfect, the Protestants, having resolved to separate themselves from the general Church, not only from that on earth, but also from that in heaven, disdain to be looked down upon with sympathy by their brethren in glory, and omit in their confession the union of God and his saints."

"But oh! how beautiful the 'general confession' is in our Service," said Geraldine; "I think, in point of fulness and pathos, it far exceeds its simple original. Do you not also think, Mr Everard, that the marginal translation in the Missal is much less beautiful than that of the Church of England?"

"You are accustomed and attached to the latter," replied he, "and so, I confess, am I. The language is both touching and powerful. As for the English part of the Missal, I scarcely know it, and you, too, Geraldine, will soon acquire sufficient knowledge of the Latin, to require no translation. Now let us go on to the 'Absolution,' which you see is quite as authoritative in our ritual, as in the other, with this addition in the Protestant absolution, that it is enforced by the declaration, that God hath given power and commandment to His ministers, to pronounce this forgiveness and loosing of their sins to those which be truly penitent."

"Then comes in the Church of England Service the 'Lord's prayer,' which, in the Roman Catholic Service, is deferred till the more solemn part of the Liturgy; then, after a few versicles and responses from priest and people, in both services, the Catholic priest ascends the steps of the altar. The Service from that period, is in the Church of England, termed the 'Communion Service,' but, as to go immediately to that would be to omit the great part of the Protestant Service, we must now leave the Catholic priest at the altar, till we have borrowed from the Breviary all that is to form the Morning Service of the Protestant Church up to that point."

"Oh! have you a Breviary? I hope you have," cried Geraldine.

"Not here," replied Mr Everard, "but I can supply the part of one in point of reference. The psalm, 'O come let us sing

unto the Lord,' is the opening psalm in the Catholic service of Matins, the 'Venite Adoremus.' The Psalms appointed for every day in the year, as well as the Lessons, are all retained exactly from the Breviary. The glorious 'Te Deum,' (We praise thee, O God) was the joint effusion of St Ambrose and St Augustine. The 'O be joyful,' 'Jubilare Deo,' also from the Breviary.

"That is," said Geraldine, "these Psalms and Lessons were all arranged from the Bible into a regular Church Service, in the Breviary, and the original framers of the Church of England Service saw no reason to quarrel with Scripture merely because the arrangement was made by Catholics."

"Exactly so! Next follows the 'Credo,' or Belief, which, in this part of the service, is that called the Apostles', and recited in the Matins and Complin office, as well as in the private devotion of every private Catholic family. The constant interchange of Christian charity between the priest and people in 'The Lord be with you, and with thy spirit,' is the 'Dominus vobiscum,' &c. of the Mass, as also 'Let us pray' (Oremus.)

"The collect for the day occurs twice in the Church of England Service, and is taken from the Breviary with Protestant omissions. Then follows 'the Litany,' as it is exclusively termed, from its being the only one in the Established Church. It is compiled from the various Catholic Litanies, and wound up by that exquisite appeal to the Redeemer, as 'Lamb of God,' which is the 'Agnus Dei' of the Catholic Mass. Then follow detached prayers, of which that by St Chrysostom is the last; and then, with the Apostolic blessing this part of the service is concluded.

"Then the second part, particularly denominated the 'Communion Service,' begins, which, in all but its awful belief, is the same precisely as the Mass, though not in the same order. The loud announcement of the Ten Commandments, preceded by the Lord's Prayer, is an admirable addition by the compilers of the English Liturgy. That fine collect, 'O Lord, unto whom all hearts be open,' &c. is from the Missal; I forget for which day it is appointed.

"After this, we may rejoin the Catholic priest at the altar, during the Collect, Epistle, Gospel, and Nicene Creed; for, in the English Establishment, they follow in the same order, and are literal translations from the Missal.

"The sermon is preached at this part of the service in both

Churches, and then (now turn, in the Book of Common Prayer, to the Communion Service) in each ritual begins the 'Offertory,' (the name of which is retained) or offering up of the Chalice and Paten: while, in the Church of England, alms are collected from the congregation, the clergyman reading appropriate verses of Scripture. Next he prays for the 'whole estate of Christ's Church upon earth,' which prayer is substituted for the 'Commemoration of the living,' in the Canon of the Mass. Next follows, the earnest exhortations and warnings of the minister, that none shall approach unworthily the 'Table of the Lord,' followed by a general confession.

"Then follows, you see, the Absolution, by the chief ecclesiastic present, together with verses from Scripture, full of encouragement and peace; and now observe, that all this part of Exhortation, Confession, Absolution, and of spiritual consolation and encouragement, is to compensate for the deprivation of that private preparation in the tribunal of penance, deemed necessary by Catholics before approaching the altar.

"Then follows the literal translation of the Canon of the Mass, beginning with the words, 'Sursum corda,' 'Lift up your hearts,' &c. through the responses and solemn preface to the 'Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth,' 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth,' &c.

"Now comes the solemn part, namely, that of the consecration of the elements, and you see the Church of England priest follows the order prescribed by the Catholic ritual, but accompanied by a prayer, explanatory of the faith of his Church on this awful subject."

"What an embarrassed and confused prayer this appears to me now," said Geraldine, "and how characteristic of the compromising spirit in which it was dictated."

"Well! well! Let us now get to the end of the two Services, and then we will ponder on the prayer. In both rituals the priest first communicates, and then administers to the people, in the words of Christ himself.

"Then follows the 'Post Communion,' the 'Glory be to God on high,' or Catholic 'Gloria in Excelsis,' and the whole terminates with the blessing of the priest."

"Thank you," said Geraldine; "I have followed you in both Missal and Prayer Book throughout, and have been greatly interested in comparing the two Services. How astonished many

of the violent orthodox would be to find, that their Liturgy, by which they are ever ready to swear, is but a compilation from what they consider the devil's books, namely, the Breviary and the Missal! Now, let me have a Breviary, if you possibly can, or else tell me the contents of that book, the very name of which is, as you say, a terror to Protestants?"

"I can bring you from my home, when next I visit you," replied Mr Everard, "a Diurnal, which is the Breviary condensed, and could I have any intercourse with the priest here, I would let you see the work itself, which is in four volumes, one for each quarter of the year. It could not be well bound up in one volume, as the long lessons of the Matins service swell it to a vast bulk. The plan of the Breviary is this—Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Complin."

"‘Complin’ is a term with which I am not in the least acquainted," said Geraldine: "it does not sound nearly so ancient and canonical as the other Catholic services."

"Ah, but it is a very beautiful service," replied Mr Everard, "and, excepting Matins, used to inspire me with more devout feelings than any of the other canonical hours. I can recall, almost as vividly as though it were but a year ago, the Complin service at a church belonging to an order of monks at —— in Hungary. While lingering in that town, from the illness of the friend who travelled with me, I used every evening to steal into that church and listen to the choir. This service, as its name implies, is the ‘completion,’ of the canonical hours, the last public act of prayer; and this very feeling, the obscurity of the sacred building, and the previous silence, all added to the impression made on me, as the fine voices of two younger monks used to chaunt in the old Gregorian tone, ‘In manus tuas, Domino, commendo spiritum meum. Redemisti nos, Domine Deus veritatis!’"

"I think," said Geraldine, "that I should find but little difficulty in following the Latin service, first, from my knowledge of Italian, and then from my remembrance of almost every part of Scripture, and of the Church of England Liturgy. So that, if I catch one or two words, of which I have no doubt, I am then enabled to finish the sentence. For instance, what you have just said is—‘Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth!’ How consoling," added she, "is that nightly surrender of one's whole

being into the care of him who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth."

"Yes!" said Mr Everard; "and I never felt that more truly than when those two young monks so devoutly intoned the verses."

"And you, therefore, repeated them most devoutly," observed Geraldine, "and in such unusually beautiful Latin, that it sounded almost Italian, and far easier to understand than the pronunciation you employ when quoting to my uncle."

"I pronounced the vowels as the Catholics do in all lands, that is, as it is pronounced at Rome; and, as you observe, the sound is much finer than in our college Latin, which Protestantism has rendered *national*, and not *universal*, as it seeks to do with every thing on which it can lay its contracting spell."

"I suppose," said Geraldine, smiling, "that we are all to speak Catholic Latin in your Utopia?"

"Of course, it must be used between those of different countries, when ignorant of each other's living tongue," replied he.

"Already have Protestant Englishmen felt the inconvenience, when abroad, of pronouncing a universal language in a manner which those of other countries cannot understand."

"I wish," said Geraldine, putting the Missal into Mr Everard's hand, "that you would read me some more of the Church Latin, that I may catch the exact pronunciation."

He did so; and then, after commenting again on the sonorous and majestic tones of the Church language, Geraldine observed, that she found the Italian differ very little in pronunciation from its parent tongue, except in the "ci" and "ce," and the "chi" and "che" which, she concluded, were modern corruptions.

"Yes," said he, "these are decided corruptions; but they have crept into the Latin at Rome, just as it has been found impossible to keep the Catholic Latin in England wholly free from Protestant innovation in sound. To you, however, I am purposely steering clear of either, and am giving you what I conceive to be the pure old Roman Latin."

"How much I should enjoy," said Geraldine, "following the Latin service with a Missal, in which there is a marginal translation. It seems to me that any one of ordinary capacity must acquire in a short time sufficient knowledge of the language for all the purposes of devotion. The modern teachers of the Hamiltonian and Jacotôt schools, proceed on this plan of con-

stant reading with marginal translations ; and in my own case, with the German, I have found it most successful. Still, I have been told, that the poorer sort of Catholics are seldom seen to hold a Missal in their hands, and yet are apparently as much 'au fait' in all parts of the service, as though it were read in their native tongue."

"The Catholic service of the Mass is a representation of the great sacrifice on the cross for man's redemption," replied Mr Everard. "Not a movement of the priest, not a change in the vestments, nor in the ornament of the altar, but has been explained and exhibited before the Catholic from his infancy. On entering, therefore, his church, he has but to look towards the officiating priest, and he can tell at once, and without hearing a word, exactly at what part of the service to join in heart and intention. When you go amongst Catholics, you will find all sorts of prayer-books—the Missal, perhaps, being in the hand of very few, except on Sundays and grand festivals, and even then, some favourite book of prayers will be taken up during those parts of the service in which the priest supplicates in secret for the people around him, and for the whole Church."

"This diversity of private devotion, during public service," said Geraldine, "would seem strange to a member of the Church of England : but I conclude that these different books are written so as to accord with the established rubric."

"They are so ; and for those who go to Mass every morning of their lives, some new form of words must be requisite. In short, you will invariably find in the Roman Catholic Church inexhaustible variety united to immovable stability, and for a universal Church it must be so. Her dogmas cannot change—she cannot suffer a breach to be made in her walls of vast enclosure : but within that enclosure there is expansion, there is freedom ! She is a glorious Church, and testimony to her wisdom is rendered at different periods, by those even who protest from her. Listen to this extract from Sharon Turner's *England*, Book II. page 28 :—'With all its defects, the *Church of Europe, during the middle ages*, was a venerable and splendid pile of moral and mental architecture, which had been, from pure philanthropy, built up in this country and in France by the Popedom itself, as it was in Germany and Friezland by English missionaries, and in Switzerland by Irish coadjutors, agents under their Roman chief. For ages it had been the library of Europe.

the preserver of ancient literature, the friend of youthful education, and the genial home of all the learning of the Christian world. Its monasteries became the asylums of human comfort, and the protectors of social peace, in many turbulent and calamitous periods, and were often the nurseries for some of the diviner virtues of our ascending nature. Its *general fabric* was at all times a needed and effectual bulwark of civil freedom, against *royal encroachments* and *martial aristocracies*.' "

CHAPTER XXI.

Could he his godhead veil with flesh and blood,
And not veil these again to be our food?
His grace in both is equal in extent,
The first affords us life, the second nourishment,
And if he can, why all this frantic pain
To construe what his clearest words contain,
And make a riddle what he made so plain?

Dryden.

THERE was one solemn point of doctrine which Geraldine had shrunk from discussing with either of her uncles, and on which she could not bring herself to speak even to Mr Everard. This was Transubstantiation. All her doubts and researches on this point were confined to books, with unceasing reference to Scripture. Of all the points of separation between the Churches, this awful question of a miraculous change in the elements at consecration, is one of the deepest interest to the devout communicant. As a young girl, Geraldine had believed simply the words of Christ, and bowed in humble gratitude to a mystery of love which she could not fathom; in later years, her reason had been taught to consider the sacrament as a solemn pledge of remembrance and of fidelity, but all beyond this as a superstitious dwelling on the material, instead of the spiritual, union, and a desecration of the awful majesty of God. Geraldine now came to the full investigation of this doctrine, and found ample testimony on the Protestant side amongst the divines in the Elverton Library; while Milner's "End of Controversy," and the "Faith of Catholics," were the only books on the other side in her possession. But it was not so much by argument that Geraldine hoped to arrive at the truth. She read what each party had to say, and then turned again to Scripture. With respect to the most powerful argument, considered conclusive by Protestants against a miraculous change in the sacrament of the altar, namely,

that God often demands our faith in that which is above our senses, but never in that which is against them, Geraldine found its refutation in the Gospel narrative, at the baptism of our Lord. To the eye of sense, the bodily form of a dove rested upon him; but faith demands our acknowledgment of the presence of the Holy Ghost: and to indulge in vain inquiries as to how far the plumage and muscular action of the bird were an appearance, or a reality, would be much on a par with all that is profanely advanced against Transubstantiation. In entering on this deep and awful subject, Geraldine was quite on her guard respecting her natural disposition of mind to receive willingly that which is mysterious, spiritual, and supernatural: but, on consideration, these were some of the arguments which had the greatest weight in convincing her reason. Were the holy sacrament to consist merely of bread and wine in commemoration of our Lord's death, then the reality falls short of the Old Testament types of this solemnity. Melchisedec brought forth bread and wine as types, of what? Only bread and wine? The manna from heaven, itself a miracle, how could it prefigure less than a miracle? Also she remarked, in the detailed account given by St Luke of the first celebration of these holy mysteries, that our Lord followed the custom of the Jews, continued to this day, of giving, after supper, bread and wine around to the guests, in token of hospitality and good will. The last day of the festival of the Passover is concluded by the master of the house holding a cup of wine, while he repeats a considerable portion of Scripture. He then drinks, and gives to others to drink of the cup. The Evangelist first describes our Lord's observing this ceremony from verse fifteen to eighteen, at which time He speaks of eating the Passover with his disciples, before He should suffer, telling them also that He shall no more drink of the fruit of the vine, till the kingdom of God shall come. *After* this, begins the celebration of the mysteries, at verses nineteen and twenty; and the candid examiner of this *twofold* description will see, that to quote the expression of "fruit of the vine," as nullifying the belief of a miraculous change in the chalice, is useless, because it applies to the Jewish custom just alluded to, and not to the institution of the divine mystery. Again, when dwelling on the sixth chapter of St John, Geraldine could not but perceive that, although in every other discourse our Lord explains all that has been figurative and obscure, yet, when the Jews are

offended at such a trial of their faith, "too hard for them to bear," so that from that time they left him, to return no more, he did not recall them to explain his words, which, if figurative, this merciful and *just* God would certainly have done.

Geraldine then examined the Calvinistic exposition of this chapter, in which this "hard saying" is made to bear on "predestination" and "free grace," and pronounced it to be the greatest straining from simplicity. In verse sixty-three, which is the grand point on which the Protestant expositor rests, to overturn all the rest of the chapter, the expression, "The flesh profiteth nothing," she found rendered by Catholic commentators to mean, that the fleshly or carnal wisdom of man profiteth nothing in understanding the deep mysteries of God. Geraldine could not believe that Christ should contradict himself; and after having said, "He that eateth my flesh shall abide in me," that He should then say that *His* flesh profiteth nothing. He does not here say *my* flesh, but *the* flesh: and she decided it to be impossible that this one verse, however rendered, should contradict the whole plain and explicit declaration of our Lord, beginning at verse fifty-one, to the end of the chapter. Nothing, however, confirmed her belief more in this perpetual miracle of Christ's love to his Church, than the strict "discipline of the secret," observed by the early Christians respecting it, founded on the command, "Not to cast their pearls before swine," and the persuasion that faith to receive this great mystery was the gift of God. This belief and rite in the early Church was attended with the same scandalous misrepresentation as besets it now. This discipline of the secret, as well as the ancient Liturgies, Geraldine found in the "Faith of Catholics," to which she now turned.

From ST CYRIL of Jerusalem, (Fourth Century.)

"We do not speak clearly before the Catechumens on the *mysteries*, but are obliged often to use obscure expressions, in order that, while we are understood by the faithful, who are instructed, those, who are not so, may not suffer."

The Synod of Alexandria.

(Speaking in reprehension, says)—"They are not ashamed to celebrate the mysteries before the Catechumens, and, perhaps, even before the pagans, forgetting that it is written, that we

should hide the mystery of the king, and in contempt of the precept of our Lord, that we must not place holy things before dogs, nor pearls before swine. For it is not lawful to show the mysteries openly to the uninitiated, lest, through ignorance, they scoff at them, and the Catechumens be scandalized through indiscreet curiosity."

From ORIGEN, (Third Century.)

"Whosoever is instructed in the mysteries, knows the flesh and blood of the Word of God. Let us not then dwell on a subject known to the initiated, and which the uninitiated ought not to know."

TERTULLIAN, (Third Century.)

(Addressing his wife on the subject of her marrying an infidel, in case of his death.) "Will not your husband know what you taste in *secret* before any other food? And if he perceives bread, will he not imagine that it is what is so much spoken of?"

From conversations with Mr Everard, as well as from her own researches into early ecclesiastical record, Geraldine had found that, to preserve this secrecy, tortures and death were endured by the early Christians. She then turned to the ancient Liturgies of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Constantinople, Rome, Milan, also the Syriac, Nestorian, and Coptic Liturgies, all which she found to be the same with respect to the awful manner in which their belief is expressed (when the *faithful alone* are present) of a *change* in the Elements, and in a propitiatory sacrifice to the Deity.

Extracts from the Liturgy of Jerusalem.

"Have mercy on us, O God, the Father Almighty, and send thy Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, equal in dominion to Thee and thy Son, who descended in the likeness of a dove on the Lord Jesus Christ: who descended on the holy apostles in the likeness of tongues of fire;—that, coming, He may *make* this bread the heavenly Body, the life-giving Body, the saving Body, the Body giving health to souls and bodies: the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and eternal life to those who receive it: Amen."—"And may *make* what is mixed in this chalice the Blood of the New Testament, the saving Blood, the life-giving Blood, the heavenly Blood, the

Blood giving health to soul and body : the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ : Amen." " Wherefore we offer to Thee, O Lord, this tremendous and unbloody *Sacrifice*, for the holy places which Thou hast enlightened by the manifestation of Christ thy Son. Grant thy blessing, O Lord! again and again, through this holy oblation and *propitiatory* sacrifice, which is offered to God the Father, and is sanctified, completed, and perfected, by the descent of the Holy Ghost."

Liturgy of Constantinople.

" O Lord God Almighty, make us worthy to offer Thee gifts and spiritual sacrifices ; and grant that we may find grace before Thee, and that our sacrifice may be acceptable to Thee. Bless, O Lord, this holy bread. Make, indeed, this bread the precious Body of thy Christ. Bless, O Lord, this chalice, and what is in this chalice, the precious Blood of thy Christ, *changing* by thy Holy Spirit : Amen."

Alexandrian Liturgy.

" O King of Glory, make us worthy to stand at Thy holy table, and to consecrate thy immaculate Body and thy precious blood. Do thou, O Lord, by thy voice, *change* these offerings. Do thou, who art here present, complete this mystical Liturgy."

As Geraldine finished these testimonials of the united and exalted faith of the early Church respecting this high mystery of love, she knelt, in token of submission, exclaiming, " Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief!" Her next thought was, of that class of Protestants, who, like the unbelieving Jews, in a proud and scotting spirit, had found Christ's words too hard to bear, and had sacrificed faith to the fleshly reason which would profit them nothing. From the wide spreading of this disbelief in the mystery of the altar, it would seem that God had permitted the Protestant world to depart, as He had done the Jews, for he has said, " My spirit shall not always strive with man!" This was an awful thought, and fraught with so much pain and terror, that Geraldine, unable to dwell on it, turned to the Protestant account of the supposed introduction of the doctrine of Transubstantiation to the belief of the Christian world, at a dark and priest-ridden period in the annals of the Church. Cave, the learned author of the "Lives of the Fathers," was great

authority ; but when Geraldine read his cool assertion, so implicitly believed by the Protestant world, that, in eight hundred and sixty-five, Paschasius Radbert, Abbot of Corbey, first introduced the doctrine of Transubstantiation, she could not help smiling. "No!" cried she, "even my researches have been deep enough to refute this assertion. In eight hundred and sixty-five, the Eastern Churches had separated from the Latin Churches, a lamentable jealousy existed on their side regarding any measures of discipline which they apprehended might be forced on them from Rome, they were in a disposition to reject every thing thence, and yet we find all these schismatical Churches agreed on this awful point of Faith. We find no council convened to pronounce on the novelties introduced by the Benedictine Monk. His book was combated by Erigena and other Sectarians, just as a treatise on the Holy Trinity would have found an antagonist reply amongst the Arians ; but that the work of any individual, however learned or pious, should have changed the faith not only of his own Church but also that of the Greek, Nestorian, Coptic, and Syriac communities, is a stretch of belief quite beyond me, and in fact beyond any one who has become aware of the order and government of the Church respecting any novelties in religion. We find the contrast between the calm approval of Paschasius Radbert's book by the Church, and that stern sentence which fell on Berengarius, in 1050 ; a sentence revoked in 1055, on his recantation ; but when he began afresh to publish his disbelief in Transubstantiation, a council was held at Rome, to which he was cited, and where he again abjured his opinions, which (like those of Nestorius and Arian in earlier ages) were examined and condemned by the Church."

"No, Mr Everard," said Geraldine, in reply to her old friend's authoritative inquiry respecting her mornings' studies, "No, I cannot talk with you on this subject of my thoughts. I am so happy in our many points of agreement, that I will not enter upon the one on which we must part."

"Then I divine it," cried Mr Everard, and a long pause ensued, during which Geraldine was both pained and encouraged by the long-drawn sigh which from time to time escaped from him. At length he said, "The contradictions involved in the doctrine of the Eucharist are the great stumbling-block to us Protestants, who argue *its* impossibility on the ground that even

the Deity cannot work that which is mathematically inconsistent—as that two and two should make three—or that a circle should be square.”

“But we cannot argue mathematically on a miracle,” pleaded Geraldine.

“Well, girl, well, I have thought pretty deeply on this subject; and supposing the system broached by Bishop Berkeley (known as the Berkeleian Philosophy) to be correct, would it not reconcile the apparent contradictions in the belief of Catholics respecting this great mystery of the Holy Eucharist? I have sometimes thought of proposing this as a subject of curious speculation, from which an argument might be drawn thus. The doctrine of immaterialism may be true. If it be true, then there is no contradiction in the Catholic belief: if it be not true, may not the material system be such, though unknown to man, as, when explained and opened to his view, to render the mystery of the Eucharist perfectly clear and comprehensible? Immaterialism was broached by a Protestant bishop, and the belief in it is not considered heterodox either in Catholic or Protestant Churches. The first approaches to it invest it with an air of ridicule; but when Berkeley’s ideas are thoroughly investigated, much ingenuity is discovered in the system, and one is led to see, that, if improbable, it is far from impossible. This requires some deep thinking.”*

* See the Rt. Rev. Dr Baines’s Letter to Archdeacon Moysey.

END OF VOL. I.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

To-morrow for fresh fields and pastures new.

MILTON'S *Lycidas*.

THE long and smiling days of summer had now passed, and with them the first months of a bright autumn; the rides and drives were over, and home occupations increased in interest. Geraldine, ever full of resources, and perfectly happy in the society of her two chosen friends, continually occupied also in the pursuit of Catholic knowledge, and each day hoping to have an interview with the priest of Elverton, without compromising Mr Everard, was sorry to be disturbed in her retirement by an invitation, which almost amounted to a command, as coming from her father's bosom friend, and her godfather, the Earl of Hungerford. It had been arranged between General Carrington and his Lordship, that, whenever Dr Sinclair should be compelled to return to Oxford, Geraldine should remove to Sedgemoor Priory, and the illness of Lady Hungerford had alone prevented the fulfilment of this engagement—thus enabling the little party at the Hall to continue several weeks longer together.

"If you accept this invitation to the Priory," cried Miss Graham, much distressed, "you will be meeting again with all those Catholics—Lady Winefride Blount, the countess Angela, and all that set. For you know that Lord Hungerford piques himself on his liberality, and, provided he could indulge in his joke and his laugh, would willingly have the Pope on his right, and the Grand Mufti on his left hand, every Sunday at dinner!"

"Oh! that Countess Angela," cried Geraldine, suddenly recovering from the annoyance which this summons to the Priory had given her; "do you really think I shall meet her there?"

The colour mounted into Katherine's cheeks; but she did not express, for she could scarcely define, the vexation of her feelings.

"If I could hope," continued Geraldine, "that at length"

should see and converse with this gifted creature, whom all seem to revere and cherish, I would willingly remove to Sedgemoor during the winter months, especially as Lord Hervey is abroad, and I take you and Mr Everard with me. You know, Kate," added she, laughing, and caressing her friend, "that you cannot find it in your heart to desert me, when exposed to fresh dangers from Popery!"

Miss Graham was still silent; for she could not determine with her conscience whether or not to accept the invitation given her, as Miss Carrington's friend, to pass the Christmas at Sedgemoor Priory, where the family were scarcely strict enough for her principles. However, before the return of Lord Hungerford's groom with Geraldine and Mr Everard's letters, she gratified her friend by consenting: her generous desire to be a continual monitor to Geraldine in the midst of Catholic attraction and proselytism, determining her to brave the crowd of strangers, and all that she expected to dislike, in the projected change from the Protestant to the Catholic side of the county.

"My dear Sir," said Geraldine to Mr Everard, when they met after the departure of the letters,—“you are now to be rewarded for all your self-denial. Long ere this you would have joined the sporting party at Sedgemoor, and all the excitement of their political, scientific, and humorous ‘table talk,’ but for me.”

“Well! well!” said he, “where is the merit of lingering here, if metal more attractive be found at Elverton than at Sedgemoor?”

“And what day have you fixed for leaving the Hall, Geraldine?” said Miss Graham.

“On the day previous to Lady Hungerford's birth-day, which falls on Tuesday week, the tenth of December, and which has always been celebrated in a joyous though quiet manner at Sedgemoor. So that we have nearly a fortnight to pass together in our happy retirement, during which time, Kate, we may finish the many pretty beginnings we have made in the abundance of our summer leisure,—amongst other things, your view of the valley church, and my bust of my father.”

This bust of General Carrington had been begun several months previously to his leaving England, during the last season passed with his daughter at their residence in Berkeley Square, where, taking advantage of those early hours which in London are rarely interrupted, Geraldine had succeeded in producing a most spirit-

ed likeness of her father, which she hoped to place in the opposite niche to one occupied by a bust of her lamented mother in the great Hall at Eiverton. The work had been executed during a tour for health in Italy, in the last year of Mrs Carrington's life, by the matchless hand of Canova, and an artist of more experience than our heroine would have shrunk from the competition; but Geraldine, in the same awakened perception of latent genius which produced the famous "Edanchio son pittore!" and in the simplicity of her filial piety, boldly modelled from the head which she thought all perfection, a copy full of genius and full of faults. It had been the task of the talented sculptor Behnes to point out the latter,—and Geraldine had at length carried down to the Hall a cast, which, during some weeks, she kissed by day and dreamed of by night, until that admiring yet true critic, Mr Everard, objected to a fold in the drapery, and smilingly watched the undaunted courage with which Geraldine now brought to light again her original model, and worked anew on the drapery till even he was satisfied. It now only remained to pack up this original model, and send it where fresh casts might be taken; and as Geraldine herself undertook this with Mr Everard, "How strange it is," said she, "that my late theological studies are so wound round this dear work of my hands, that I cannot look at the one without recalling the other! And yet, alas! I fear that they are sworn foes, not friends; and within these last few weeks especially," added she, looking round to be secure from listeners, "I have had sad forebodings of my father's dire wrath, against what he will think an unpardonable surrender of my former principles."

"So long as you continue to conform to all your former habits and duties, and to keep your more enlarged knowledge to yourself," replied Mr Everard, "the General will care but little for these vague rumours of your inclination for Catholicity."

"But he will care for my actually becoming a Catholic," said Geraldine.

"To be sure he will; but you cannot think such a step necessary," said the old gentleman. "Consider your promise to stay by the Church of England until you shall have fulfilled all her precepts and counsels, which you have never yet done; and then to reflect, whether you do not serve the cause of true religion more by giving a firm and public testimony of reformed Catholicity in your own community, than by throwing your warm heart and

powerful intellect into that side of the scale which needs you not. Converts from either Church are exactly what would mar my great, my comprehensive scheme of universal concession, and universal union. No ! girl, no !—Have strength of mind enough to remain where you are, and revive the energies of that part of the Universal Church in which you were born. I have great reliance," added he, "on the intermarriages which of late years are constantly taking place between the members of the sister Churches.—Pray, do you know the young Countess de Grey ?"

"Not yet personally," replied Geraldine, "but I hope to meet her at the Priory."

"You must give up that hope. Our pretty Angela visits nowhere during Advent ; and then come all the Christmas festivals, which Catholics love to keep amongst themselves. She will probably then be at Burnleigh, where they muster a pretty large congregation of 'the faithful!' I wish that Lord Hervey may return from the Continent, and be introduced to her before Lent ; for I want him to marry her, and not you ; while you would do well to think of Eustace de Grey !"

Geraldine here laughed too much, to please Mr Everard ; who vindicated himself by—"Well ! I maintain that marriages between those of different communions do the cause of true religion great service, by inducing constant concession and forbearance, and by compelling an acquaintance with each other's faith. Angela de Grey has hitherto refused to marry, and report assigns different motives for this conduct. Some say there is a private engagement between her and Eustace ; others say she is at heart a nun !"

"But why tell me what others say," said Geraldine ; "when, as the friend of the family, you must know more than the public ?"

"How can I be expected," replied he, "to know what the lady probably does not herself know—her own mind ?"

The old man said this with unusual testiness, and Geraldine was debating whether she might venture to inquire the cause, when morning visitors were announced, and no opportunity again occurred of renewing this delicate subject, before the party from Elverton Hall started, on the ninth of December, for their winter quarters.

The journey occupied but a few hours, and, with the early

dusk, the two ladies, with their attendants, drove under the gothic archway of Sedgemoor Priory. Another travelling carriage had preceded theirs during the last mile, which had been so attentively watched by Geraldine, at each turn of the road, that Miss Graham had laughingly inquired, whether, from crucifixes and missals starting from the trunks and imperials, or whether, from the particular trot of the horses, she expected to ascertain that Catholics or Protestants were to alight from the equipage before them?

On entering the house, Geraldine and Katherine, according to the custom of the Priory, were at once conducted to their rooms, where Lady Hungerford came to bid them welcome, embracing Geraldine with the warmest affection, and then turning to Katherine with graceful courtesy, which appeared to elicit but a stiff and cold return from that lady, who continued to endure, rather than to respond to, the polite reception given her as Geraldine's friend. At length, Lady Hungerford withdrew to her toilette, and the friends were left again alone.

"Katherine," said Geraldine, "I trust you are not thinking it necessary to be disagreeable during your stay here, from a mistaken feeling of religious strictness? I know that your consent to this visit proceeded from friendship to me; but, trust me, the sacrifice will be very incomplete, unless you be disposed to take my friends upon trust, as they take you."

"Geraldine," replied Miss Graham, "I do not expect to be popular with these fashionable and ungodly friends of yours, but I shall just steer my own course, and adhere to my own principles by the grace of God.

"And God forbid you should ever do otherwise!" said Geraldine; "but it is perfectly compatible with the strictest adherence to principle, to be gentle and indulgent to others, however you may differ from them in opinion. Christian humility must ever produce that true politeness of the heart, which is directly opposed to your present self-righteous contempt of those whose guest you are. How do you know that they are 'ungodly'? You cannot read their hearts!"

"I have never personally known this family," replied Katherine, "but I have heard much of them from Major Tankerville, the chosen friend of Lord Hervey, their truly pious and afflicted son."

"Afflicted!" cried Geraldine, smiling; "what do you mean?"

Lord Hervey has long since recovered the death of his wife, to the great satisfaction of his family, and has no other woe of which you, Katherine, are likely to be aware."

"He surely has the affliction of a Christian son, in seeing his aged parents in all the worldliness which he has renounced. Major Tankerville assured me, that the example of their son, so far from arousing them from their sleep of death, had only alienated them still more from every thing serious."

"I cannot be surprised at this alienation," said Geraldine, "for not only was Lord Hervey, in the first ardour of his conversion, perfectly overbearing in his pharisaical treatment of his parents, but the mistaken friends, by whom he was then surrounded conducted themselves still more rudely,—without tact, without taste, without feeling. As for Major Tankerville, his praise-God manner, that '*he* is not as other men are,' always disgusted me, even during my own inflated days. The last time we met was when he accompanied Lord Hervey, in a morning visit to me, in Berkeley Square, when, inquiring after several families in the neighbourhood, he turned to Lord Hervey, and added,—“ And the old couple at the priory—any hopes there? any ‘shaking of the dry bones?’ ”

"Ladies," interposed Mrs Kelsoe, who now appeared, in high spirits, and supremely well dressed, "the first bell has rung; and you have never yet answered me, Miss Carrington, as to the black satin and the pink chalis?"

"Kelsoe, tell me who are in the house as visitors?" inquired Geraldine, as she made choice of one of the dresses held before her.

"Why, ma'am, I have had but a moment's sight of Mrs Bruce; however, I believe I heard all about the company at present here. Only one arrival of the old set, as it were, besides the county families. The carriage just before us was Sir John and Lady Anne Scotney's; and his sister, Miss Scotney, is come with them."

"Well, but the families of the neighbourhood?" interrupted Geraldine.

"Colonel Torrington's family, and Lady Winefride Blount, is all, I think, ma'am."

"Oh!" cried Geraldine, "then *she* is actually here: make haste, Kelsoe, I believe it is really late!"

The toilette now proceeded in silence, and the half-hour had

expired, when, with the usual symptoms which foretold that she had some intelligence to impart, Mrs Kelsoe began,—“ There is another arrival expected late to-night, Miss Carrington, which I suppose will interest and concern you more than the coming of any old Roman lady: but this arrival is to be a secret from Lady Hungerford, and to surprise her on her birth-day. So long as you must have known, ma'am, the hopes of this noble family, I thought it best to prevent you being taken unprepared, which, for young ladies, is not pleasant—though, to be sure, I don't suppose my lord would show himself to-night.”

Geraldine's heart beat violently, though not with pleasure. “ You mean, I conclude, Kelsoe, that Lord Hervey is expected to arrive to-night from the Continent ? ”

“ Yes, ma'am ; my lord's valet wrote word to the housekeeper to have all in readiness for to-night, but on no account to mention it : at least so Mrs Bruce told me.”

“ A well kept secret ! ” observed Geraldine, smiling.

“ Ma'am,” said Mrs Kelsoe, “ I thought it right to tell you, that you might be on your guard ; for I have my own reasons for supposing that my lady's birth-day is but a cover for meeting you, Miss Carrington, who can't receive visitors now at the Hall ; and I have not lived as lady's maid all my life without ascertaining that young ladies prefer knowing of a surprise beforehand.”

The last bell now rang, and Geraldine, with Miss Graham, descended to the drawing-room, which they found well filled. The first object to Geraldine was Lord Hungerford, whom she had not seen since her father's departure, and whose feeling towards her was truly paternal. He was evidently watching for her entrance, and his hearty embrace, as he welcomed her to her second home, brought the tears into her eyes, and produced a benevolent smile on the countenance of the person with whom his lordship had been conversing, and who proved to be the identical “ old Roman lady,” whose arrival had so much gratified Geraldine, and alarmed Mrs Kelsoe, namely, the Lady Winefride Blount. Geraldine was reassured by that smile, and by the extended hand of recognition, that she had not been classed, and then forgotten, with the host of young fashionables, whom her ladyship had necessarily mixed with and endured, during the London season of their first acquaintance. No time, however, was now permitted for conversing, even on the lightest

topics, as the interchange of civilities with well known acquaintances, and introductions to the few strangers present, occupied Geraldine's unwilling attention, till the general move to the dining-room. Amongst these strangers was a travelled author, whose quarto, just published, had been dedicated to Lord Hungerford, but had remained unnoticed until that morning, when, suddenly remembering the arrival of Mr ———, her ladyship, ever full of the proprieties of life, had hastily cut the leaves open, read the heads of the chapters, and now politely led the conversation to the contents of the book in question. This was conducted with good taste and discrimination, and, as several persons were present, who possessed tact sufficient to follow the clue given, much information was elicited by those who had witnessed the scenes described by the traveller, and whose impressions differed just enough to produce animated discussion. Geraldine, who was seated nearly opposite to this gentleman, found her attention much divided throughout the dinner, by the classical and religious allusions made to the temples and tombs of Italy by those around her, at the same time that she could not help being amused by the visionary projects of a young German Baron, seated next to her, whose actual belief in astrology made her fancy herself retrograding to the middle ages. At length the stars and the Baron were totally forgotten; and she gave an undivided and solicitous attention to the classical tourist, as these words caught her:—"Our Lady-day, the term being retained from Romish times, is precisely the day heretofore dedicated to Cybele, and, in fact, the greater the research the greater the proof, that the ancient 'Mother of the Gods,' and the modern 'Mother of God,' differ in nothing but in name and in date."

Something was then said which Geraldine did not hear; but the travelled author continued with,—“Any one, acquainted with the Italian character and temperament, would see nothing extraordinary in their retaining their pagan idolatry, and, with a mere change of appellation, continuing to the fair portion of heaven a chivalrous obedience. In short, at every step in Italy, the classical traveller is reminded of the ancient mythology, and clearly traces the connexion between the pagan and popish rites!”

Geraldine here stole a glance at Lady Winefride Blount; but, before she could ascertain whether the smile which played on

the old lady's countenance had been caused by this speech, the signal was given by the disconcerted Lady Hungerford for the gentle sex to retire to smaller and safer topics in the drawing-room. When there, her ladyship imparted, in an admonitory whisper, to the few who were unacquainted with Lady Winefride, that her "valued old friend certainly had the misfortune to be a Catholic, but that really she was so sensible, and so well informed, and liberal, that they would find her just like other people!" To this last tribute Geraldine was by no means disposed to agree. She thought Lady Winefride very unlike "other people," and wished much to ascertain whether her characteristics were really owing to originality of character, or to circumstance and position; how much of the unbending carriage, the reserved though kind manner, the rare but intelligent smile, belonged to the woman, and how much to the Catholic in a Protestant land? Geraldine was not able, however, to fix these precise limits on that evening.

The circle of coffee-drinking ladies remained unbroken until the entrance of the gentlemen, when Lady Winefride was soon engaged as Lord Hungerford's partner at whist, and Geraldine, surrounded by old acquaintances, who had in priority of date a greater claim to her attention, was borne away to the musical instruments, in spite of her wish to hear the conversation between Mr Everard and the author, which was taking place at the other end of the room. Geraldine, however, resolved to question her learned old friend, respecting the accuracy of the traveller's sweeping assertions, and, with this hope in view, dismissed all deep thought, until music, and cards, and conversation, being over, the party dispersed, and she found herself mounting the staircase at the same time with Lady Winefride Blount. "Has the clock struck twelve?" audibly whispered Lady Hungerford's maid to another woman, as the ladies passed.

"Just on the stroke, Mrs Bruce," replied the female addressed.

"Then tell Monsieur Bigôt, that Lord Hervey had better mount at once to my lady's room, for it will be the tenth of December, and her birth-day, before they meet," added the chief speaker.

"I have unintentionally become party to an interesting little family secret," said Lady Winefride to Geraldine, as she stopped at the door of her room; "but to *you*, Miss Carrington, nothing relating to Lord Hervey could, I presume, be well a secret?"

and, as she said this, Lady Winefride threw the full light of her taper on Geraldine's countenance. Taken thus by surprise, our heroine replied eagerly,—“I was told that he was coming; but, indeed, Lady Winefride, it is nothing to me!—that is”—added she, with more embarrassment of tone, and with all the vexation of being unable to prevent herself from colouring deeply, when she least wished it—“that is,—I should much wish for the privilege of being admitted to converse with your ladyship alone to-morrow, if not inconvenient.”

“With me?” exclaimed Lady Winefride, in evident surprise; “shall you have time for me on such a day as to-morrow? Well, Miss Carrington, be it so. You have but to tap at my door to gain instant and welcome admittance. Till then, good night, and ‘Benedicite!’”

CHAPTER II.

*Is this a time for moonlight dreams
Of love and home, by mazy streams,
For fancy, with her shadowy toys,
Aerial hopes, and pensive joys?*

Keeble.

MRS KELSEY did not belie her usual penetration, when she affirmed that Lady Hungerford's birthday was but the minor motive for Lord Hervey's change of plan, and for his sudden re-appearance at the Priory, when, by his last letters, all had seemed arranged for his continuing at Geneva. The truth was, that, so long as Geraldine Carrington remained a recluse at Elverton, his lordship, feeling that all was safe respecting his hoped-for alliance with her, and unable in propriety to be a visitor at the Hall, during the absence of its master, had resolved that, in the interval of the ensuing months, he would complete a work, which he had begun at the solicitation of his London evangelical friends, illustrative of the present state of parties at Geneva, and which, from his introductions to the leading controversialists there, was best to be effected on the spot. When, however, by Lady Hungerford's last despatch, he discovered that Miss Carrington had consented to join the Christmas party at Sedgemoor Priory, and that, amongst the numerous guests expected, several formidable competitors might start for the same prize, Lord Hervey resolved to leave the subtleties of polemics, for a few weeks at least; and, as he must give some

reason for his change of mind, he determined, as he rapidly returned on the Calais road, to take a prominent part in the public meetings in aid of the Reformation Society, to be held in —shire, of which his lordship had received due notice, with strong appeals to his zeal and personal influence.

Notwithstanding Geraldine's anxiety to speak in private with Lady Winefride Blount, their meeting was rendered impossible by Lady Hungerford's demands on Geraldine's time and attention, not only during the birthday, but for the two following days; and it was not until the fourth evening after her arrival, that, on leaving the dining-room at a later hour than usual, Lady Winefride drew Geraldine's arm within her own, and led her to her room, where, stirring the fire into an encouraging blaze, and seating her young friend in a chair opposite to her own, the old lady began playfully,—“As you have ventured, of your own free-will, into the confessional, my dear Miss Carrington, I trust that you will let me fully know how far I can be useful to you. Trust me,” added she, more gravely, “that I should consider it a privilege, and one that would interest my feelings most deeply, could I hope that in any way I might promote your happiness.”

“You *can* promote my happiness, dear Lady Winefride,” cried Geraldine, “and I have longed for this opportunity, to tell you that, having thought and studied much, since we last met,—I am almost a Catholic!”

“A Catholic!” repeated Lady Winefride, in evident astonishment. “My dear Miss Carrington—you surprise—I might almost say you terrify me!”

“I did not think that this communication would have so much startled you,” said Geraldine. “I thought it possible that your ladyship's nephew, Sir Eustace de Grey, might have told you of my deep interest in the subjects discussed between himself and our mutual friend, Mr Everard, and that each had supplied me with books to instruct my ignorance, and disarm my prejudice.”

“No!” replied Lady Winefride very gravely. It is true that Eustace has frequently spoken of Miss Carrington, as she must be spoken of by all who know her: but I was never made acquainted with your studies, or with the share he may have had in promoting them. On the contrary, I believed his thoughts to be far differently engaged, and that, contented with your

own communion, yours had been exclusively turned to the brilliant prospects, and domestic happiness, awaiting you, as the wife of Lord Hervey."

"My friends," replied Geraldine, "have settled my future destiny with but little knowledge of the mental change, which would make a connexion with this family impossible, even supposing it to be desired by the chief person concerned, of which I beg to assure your ladyship I have had no proof."

"But allow me to assure you, with equal frankness," said Lady Winefride, "that I, as an unprejudiced spectator, require no farther proof, than has been offered me during these past days, to be assured, that on yourself alone it depends, whether or not this alliance takes place. I think very highly of Lord Hervey, as a conscientious and pious man, and I excuse his blind hatred of every thing Catholic. Think what a useful and laudable task will be yours, to enlighten the obscurity, and soften the asperities, of his mind, towards that long misunderstood and persecuted class of his countrymen, towards whom you now feel so kindly!"

"Oh, my dear madam!" cried Geraldine, "I did not request the favour of this private conversation, to discuss the good qualities of Lord Hervey, or the possible influence I might have in disengaging him from the trammels of a prejudiced party. I wish him every earthly and spiritual good; but my chief concern at present, is the peace of my own soul, and I was in hopes, from all I had been told, from all I had seen, of your ladyship, that you would not have refused to aid me!"

"You are hurt with me, dear Miss Carrington," said Lady Winefride; "but do not blame the caution with which I hear that you are '*almost* a Catholic!' for between that state of mind, and a fixed determination to enter the Catholic Church, there is a great gulf fixed, which few can pass. Faith is the gift of God! This, however, I will promise," continued she, as the distant sound of voices announced the final breaking up of the dinner party, "this I will promise—to pray constantly for you, trusting that my poor prayers may be heard in your behalf, and I will earnestly commend you to those of our blessed Lady, who cannot plead in vain!"

On returning to the drawing-room, Lord Hervey's countenance betrayed the alarm and displeasure, at the acquaintance, which, since his arrival, he had narrowly watched, and which seemed to be drawing towards intimacy, between Lady Winefride and

Geraldine. Approaching the latter, while yet apart from any group, he said, in a low voice, and very gravely, "I believe you are aware, Miss Carrington, of the awful state in which my father's old friend continues, in spite of every means of grace afforded her, in this land of Bible and of Christian privileges; and I trust you are also on your guard against that crafty spirit of proselytism, which every Romanist is bound to exert. I cannot resist giving you this warning voice, and you must assure me that, in doing so, I offend you not."

"I believe that you are mistaken," replied Geraldine, "respecting the pious and liberal-minded person to whom you allude. I am sure that you do her injustice: but I am also sure that your warning is kindly meant, and therefore I thank you."

"But will you promise to profit by this warning, which I would make tenfold more solemn, were it possible," added Lord Hervey, placing a chair for Geraldine, near a table, covered with new prints, which seemed to authorize the tête-à-tête.

"No," replied she, "for I repeat, that your warning is given in ignorance of the lady, and of her creed."

"Then, by that very defence," cried he, "I see that the poison has been already imbibed. Listen to me, for God's sake! This new friend of yours is not a mere teller of beads: she is an unusually clever woman, and well skilled in all that can 'make the worse appear the better reason.' I believe my father to have listened by far too much to her, when a boy, and, therefore, I can the better judge of the danger now threatening one but little versed in controversy."

"I am, perhaps, more versed in it than you suppose," said Geraldine, smiling, "for I have been occupied with little else ever since the beginning of the Oxford vacation, which my uncle spent at Elverton."

"Ah! the Warden, how is he?"

"He is in good health, but I fear that I have thrown him into bad spirits, for he is as much dissatisfied with me as you can be," said Geraldine; determined that, as an opening had thus been given her, she would not leave Lord Hervey in ignorance of her religious opinions.

"I could not have ventured to express dissatisfaction, and, indeed, I wait but to hear from your own lips, that there is no cause of alarm to your best—your Protestant friends.—You are silent," added Lord Hervey, as he turned over a fresh print for

her seeming notice ; but still Geraldine spoke not. At length he asked abruptly,—

“ Pray, Miss Carrington, what views does your friend Miss Graham hold ? ”

“ Oh ! the best and soundest in the world,” cried Geraldine, looking up with a bright smile of mirth, which Lord Hervey thought beautiful. “ Miss Graham’s religious opinions are precisely your own, my Lord, and must therefore entirely satisfy and delight you.”

“ The opinions of but one woman can satisfy and delight me, and all my anxiety is centred in her,” replied Lord Hervey, in a tone of such deep feeling, that Geraldine’s heart was touched, and she found it safer to join the group of gay disputants, then surrounding Lady Hungerford, with their ready spokesman, Mr Everard, demanding her casting vote, whether, as the party had now increased to a sufficient number, they should do honour to her fête by acting charades, or by dancing ?

“ But my birthday was three days ago,” said Lady Hungerford.

“ Yes ! but you know it fell on a Sunday,” exclaimed one of the fair petitioners. “ It was the only dull birthday I ever passed in this house. Do let us be merry to-night ‘ en revanche,’ dear Lady Hungerford. Only tell us,—which shall it be, acting or dancing ? ”

“ Why, really,” said Lady Hungerford, in genuine perplexity, “ I cannot tell which Hervey would endure the best. But I suppose that, as King David danced, and there is no precedent whatever in the Bible for acting, the dancing would be the least objectionable. What say you, Mr Everard ; do you think we might quote David dancing with all his might ? ”

“ I think,” replied Mr Everard, “ that, as King David’s dance was in the fervour and exaltation of religious joy, Lord Hervey would scarcely admit the precedent for to-night ; but the feasting and dancing on the return or even a prodigal son, might induce him to forgive our celebrating your ladyship’s birthday, and his own auspicious arrival, and so I vote with you, for the gay dance and the minstrel throng ! ”

“ We must supply the minstrel part from the fair musicians here,” said Lady Hungerford. “ I never dreamed of celebrating my birthday three days after the time, and must trust to the talent and good humour of my guests for making merry,—only, no waltzing ! ”

As Lady Hungerford said this, Mrs Torrington, who was an intimate friend at the Priory, and a fine musician, touched on the piano the first notes of Herz's brilliant quadrilles, and Geraldine, to whom the music was familiar, and who had determined, during the previous debate, neither to dance, nor yet to be a kill-joy, drew forth a rich accompaniment on the harp, which roused the whist party to a perception of the reason why they were driven into a corner,—and very soon all was arranged for the dance. Geraldine looked round for Katherine Graham, and perceived her, with a scared look, retreating from the importunities of the young German, and edging close to the card table, as the quietest, and, therefore, the most endurable, of the two evils. Another glance round the room ascertained that Lord Hervey also had withdrawn into a small room, forming a sort of recess to the large one in which the party danced, and there he paced slowly to and fro, till at length, by a side door, he escaped to the privacy of his own apartments; and Geraldine found, to her great dismay, that, from that moment she had lost all interest in the joyous scene, that all seemed noise and frivolity, and that it was a relief when the party at length broke up, and she was left to ponder over the fresh difficulties which Lord Hervey's continued interest in her, seemed likely to present in her path to the Catholic Church. Having dismissed her attendant, and taking leave for the night of Katherine Graham, Geraldine sat by the remains of her fire for some time, in despondency, till, suddenly rousing herself,—“This must not be!” she mentally exclaimed. “I am in no way compromised; and free I will remain, notwithstanding the advice of friends, and the treacherous whispers of my own heart!” A feeling of impatience crossed her at that moment, at the sense of honour, carried even to scrupulosity, which prevented Lady Winefride, while a guest at Sedgemoor Priory, from entering on those minor points of Catholic belief, to which Geraldine still objected. “To-morrow being Friday,” thought she, “Lady Winefride will, I know, return home at an early hour, to attend her religious duties at the chapel in Burnleigh.—Oh! that I could escape, were it only for one day, from the unlooked for danger besetting me here!”

CHAPTER III.

Ye good distressed, ye noble few, who here unbending stand
Beneath life's pressure, yet bear up awhile.

Thomson.

ON descending, the following morning, to the breakfast room, Geraldine found Lord Hungerford, with a handful of pamphlets and hand-bills, standing with his back to the fire, and listening alternately to Lord Hervey and Colonel Torrington, with that countenance of benevolent, yet humorous, expression, which was his characteristic when the speakers had, in his opinion, gone beyond their depth in argument. Lord Hervey, supported by Colonel Torrington, was earnestly enforcing something, which his father was unwilling to grant. At length, Lord Hungerford, breaking from his two companions, threw the papers on the table with a laugh, saying,—“ Well, then, let us come to a compromise. I will take the chair, provided that, in addition to all I am to say and to read for you and your party, I address the audience in an independent speech, and read a few facts that have come under my own observation.”

“ Willingly, my dear father,” returned Lord Hervey, “ on one condition——”

“ Condition !” cried the old lord, in mock dignity ; “ I'll none of your trammels !”

“ What is all this ?” said his lady, who, with the rest of the party, had now joined the disputants.

“ Oh, the same story over and over again,” replied Lord Hungerford. “ Humbug and cant have met together, palaver and twaddle have kissed each other ! Is not that as good a paraphrase as you have heard at Geneva, Hervey ?”

Colonel Torrington laughed, but Lord Hervey, suppressing the indignant reply which arose to his lips, drew one of the hand-bills from the packet on the table, and read aloud,—that “ A meeting for promoting the glorious cause of the Reformation, was proposed to be held in the Town Hall of Elverton, in the county of Stafford, on the 22nd of December, 183—, where all who valued Bible truth, were invited to support, by their presence, so important an object, at this awful crisis in the advance of Popery, and reign of Satan upon earth !”

“ I do not see how matters, that are still in advance, be come to a crisis,” observed Mr Everard.

"Therefore at any rate," added Lord Hungerford, "we may eat our breakfast in peace, after which, Hervey, I will give you an outline of the speech I should make, and the documents I should read, provided you insisted on my being chairman at this absurd meeting."

"And my conditions, my lord, were simply to hear previously the speech and the documents," said Lord Hervey, "which you now spontaneously offer."

"But what an extraordinary time of the year to select for a county meeting!" observed Miss Scotney.

"Why so?" replied Lord Hervey to the fair objector. "The depth of winter is generally the time chosen for the pleasures of a ball, in thin dresses, and at midnight. This meeting, on the contrary, will take place at mid-day, in clothing suited to the rigour of the season."

"I believe," said Colonel Torrington, "that our friend, the Major, who is the main spring of all these things, wishes to establish these meetings as much at and about Christmas as can be arranged, in order to find all the county families at their post."

"Well, now, do tell me," said Lady Hungerford, "what is the good of all these meetings? I know that Hervey thinks highly of them, and that Major Tankerville journeys about the country to promote them; but really it seems to me very ill-natured and unfriendly towards our Catholic neighbours, to be encouraging what must give them pain. It is very much against what I think Christianity, to be raking up old stories against people; and, in point of policy, it is enough to drive them into retaliation, and to mar all that proper toleration of each other's creeds, which has of late years been such a blessing in Staffordshire."

"Bravo, my lady!" cried Lord Hungerford, "you have so nearly given my intended speech, that I need not rehearse, and will merely, with the permission of the company present, read a few documents as a specimen of what the Reformation meeting may expect from me as their chairman."

Lord Hervey, who read mischief in his father's eye, suggested that perhaps another time might be more convenient; but Mr Everard, who likewise suspected the bent of Lord Hungerford's humour, which ran precisely according to his own view of the subject, encouraged his old friend to produce whatever might throw a light on the contest, and the latter, drawing forth a roll

of papers from the breast of his coat, and putting on his spectacles, prefaced his reading by turning to Mr Everard, and asking him whether he remembered, at the time of Catholic emancipation, how necessary it had been to instruct the head as well as to warm the heart, in order to serve the cause of humanity and justice?—"Now you, Everard, were a learned friend to the Catholics; but I—God help me!—knew little about their history, from the time of Guy Fawkes to the last relief bill, till I searched into acts of Parliament and became possessed of these very extracts which I am willing to give forth to this county meeting, if required. Great was the alarm, some years back, with my Tory friends, that, if emancipation were granted, the land would be once more over-run with popery, an event I should have deprecated as much as they: but I laughed at this fear, from the conviction that popery and John Bull could never shake hands again. You remember old De Grey, father to the present baronet?"

"Remember him!" replied Mr Everard, with one of his bursts of feeling; "remember him! indeed I do; and the best proof which his surviving friends can give that they remember the calm sense, the mild dignity, of the father, is by loving and serving his son."

"And pray do *you* think it necessary to give the same proof of remembering old Sir Hugh De Grey?" audibly whispered Lord Hungerford to Geraldine, without, however, a thought beyond the passing joke.

Geraldine returned some answer in the same tone of mirth, but, at the same time, being conscious that this unexpected question had drawn on her the smiling observation of the whole party, coloured deeply, and Lord Hervey's brow contracted into a frown.

"Well," continued the Earl, "I once appealed to De Grey, whether the apprehensions were not absurd, of the Catholic faith being more than tolerated in England? and the reply was—'No! my lord. When you are better acquainted with the tyranny which drove Englishmen into Protestantism, you will admit that your Tory friends have just grounds for apprehending that, when that tyranny is removed, the old faith will revive throughout the land.'

"Depend upon it, my good Sir," said I, "that the Catholic religion is contrary to the genius of the country. Our English-

man is too great a lover of simplicity, and of plain straight-forward sense, ever to prefer popery when he has once had a taste of something better, that is—better to *his* mind. A proof of how well Protestantism and John Bull suit each other, was given, in the cordial reception of the Reformation by the bulk of the nation, however painful the change might have been to the comparatively few.'

" 'Certainly that would be a proof,' replied De Grey; 'but I deny the fact.'

" 'What!' cried I, 'deny that John Bull has ever done anything but follow his own will, either in religion or politics?'

" 'Yes!' said he, 'I deny the fact, that the people of England cordially and disinterestedly changed from the religion of their forefathers; and I will give you my counter proofs, my lord, not in Catholic histories and biography, which you would doubtless consider to be as partial as we find the works of Protestants, but I refer you to Protestant acts of Parliament: and, remark this, my lord, had the Reformation been the wish of the people, no acts of Parliament would have been required to compel its reception.' Sir Hugh then referred to his pocket-book for a few dates, on which he gave me this historical sketch, which I have since verified by my own researches:—'In the year 1548, King Edward the Sixth, as supreme Head of the Church, had it ordained and enacted, that any clergyman not using the book of Common Prayer, and other rites, according to the Church of England, or using any other form of prayer, should suffer imprisonment for life! Here then,' said De Grey, 'we have the flock at once left without a pastor, or seduced, by his timorous example, into temporizing with their consciences. In 1551, this act was extended to the laity, ordering that, 'if *any* person be present at any form of prayer, or ecclesiastical rites, other than those set forth in the book of Common Prayer, he shall suffer imprisonment for life.' Soon after, it was enacted, that, for doubting the queen's ecclesiastical supremacy, (a point questioned by some Protestant divines, and denounced by Hume) her subjects were to suffer the pains of death, and forfeiture of their estates, as in cases of high treason: That to be reconciled to the Church of Rome, or withdrawn from that of England, was also punishable as for high treason: That if, at the age of sixteen years, any person went not to the Church of England Service, he should pay a penalty of twenty pounds per month, and, if

unable to pay this penalty, he should be imprisoned until he conformed. Just conceive this demand on the peasantry of a country! If unfortunately you had an estate, two-thirds of it were vested in the crown, until you became a Protestant; and if you could neither pay the penalty, nor conform against your conscience, you were forced solemnly to abjure your country, and transport yourself beyond seas for ever, giving your personal property, chattels, &c. to the crown,—the penalty on your return being the death of a felon, without benefit of clergy! Under another act, if you did not conform, you dared not move more than five miles in any direction from your own house, and neither christenings, marriages, nor burials, could take place in your family, but as according to the rites of the Church established by law. Now, what say you, Lord Hungerford, to this free choice of John Bull in the change of his religion!—this ‘cordial reception of the Reformation by the bulk of the people?’”

“‘Why, that you are referring,’ said I, ‘during some limited and peculiarly severe period, in the history of the rival Churches, to measures, which I should be the last man to defend, and which, thank God, could not, from their very barbarity, last beyond a given time.’”

“De Grey smiled, and, drawing a parcel of papers from his escritoire, put them into my hands, saying, ‘Here is an abstract of acts of Parliament, made by the Whig member, Mr C——, before this last session, and sent to me a few days ago. I have made a copy, and resign the documents to you.’”

“Now,” said the Earl, re-adjusting his spectacles, and getting the light comfortably over his left shoulder, “here are the very documents, which Mr C——, having imbodyed them in the best speech which he made that year, in the Lower House, allowed me to retain, and which I will now read without comment.”

‘Abstracts of Acts of Parliament, which subjected Catholics to penalties and punishments for exercising their religious worship, &c.’

ACT PASSED IN 1568.

‘Any person reconciling another to the Church of Rome, shall have judgment, suffer, and forfeit, as in case of high treason. All Jesuits, seminary and other priests, remaining in England, or entering the kingdom after forty days, shall for this offence

ne adjudged a traitor, and shall suffer, lose, and forfeit, as in cases of high treason. Receiving or relieving any such person shall be a felony; and sending money or relief to such persons, shall be punished with transportation and forfeiture of property. Any one knowing where a Jesuit is in the kingdom, and not discovering it, shall forfeit two hundred marks.

STATUTE PASSED IN 1581.

‘ Any person saying, or wilfully hearing, Mass, shall forfeit two hundred marks (that is, one hundred and thirty-three pounds, six shillings, and eightpence), and suffer twelve months’ imprisonment; and it shall be treason to be reconciled, or withdrawn to the Romish religion; and all aiders shall suffer as for misprision of treason.

STATUTE LIKEWISE IN 1581.

‘ Any person above the age of sixteen not going to church, or usual place of common prayer, shall forfeit twenty pounds per month; and should he absent himself still, he shall give sufficient sureties for two hundred pounds for his good behaviour, and shall so continue bound until he conform himself and come to church. And any schoolmaster, who shall not repair to the Established Church, shall forfeit ten pounds per month.

Every person forfeiting money under this act, and not able to pay the same, shall be committed to prison, there to remain until he pay the penalties, or conform himself, or go to the church, and there do as is aforesaid.

STATUTE IN 1587.

‘ Any person not getting his child baptized by a lawful minister, shall forfeit one hundred pounds.

‘ The sheriff or other officer may break open any house wherein popish recusants may be.

STATUTE IN 1605.

‘ Any person discovering where Mass was said, shall have his own pardon, and one-third of the goods, &c. forfeited by the attainder.

STATUTE IN 1627.

‘ No child to be sent beyond seas without license.

‘ Any person sending a child to a papish seminary beyond seas for instruction, shall forfeit one hundred pounds—and such child shall be afterwards incapable of inheriting his estate, or making any purchase.

‘ No person to keep a school out of the universities or colleges, unless in the family of a nobleman of the Established Church, under penalty of forty shillings per day.

‘ Any person going himself, or sending any others, beyond the seas, to be bred or instructed in popery, shall be disabled to sue or use any action at law or equity, to be executor, or administrator, or capable of any deed or legacy, or to bear any office, and shall lose and forfeit all his lands, tenements, and hereditaments, rents, annuities, offices, and estates of freehold, for and during his natural life.

STATUTE IN 1670.

‘ Any person permitting meetings in his house, offices, &c., for the exercise of religion, shall forfeit twenty pounds.

‘ Justices of the peace, constables, &c., are empowered to break open doors, &c., where they are informed such meetings may be held.

STATUTE IN 1700.

‘ A reward of one hundred pounds for taking and prosecuting a popish bishop or priest for saying Mass, or exercising any of his functions.

‘ A popish bishop or priest saying Mass, or keeping a school, shall be adjudged to perpetual imprisonment.

STATUTE IN 1714.

‘ Children sent beyond seas shall forfeit their estates, and if, on their return, they do not conform, their next of kin, being Protestant, shall inherit their estate.

‘ *Note.*—So rigidly were all these laws executed, that Lord Scroop was, in 1626, accused to the king for conniving at recusancy, inasmuch as he had only convicted one thousand six hundred and seventy Catholics, in the East Riding of Yorkshire !’

“ There !” cried Lord Hungerford, flinging down the documents with violence on the table ; “ as I said five years ago, on first reading these atrocities, so say I now. Free choice was

not the portion of England ; and furthermore, I will boldly tell my guests, that there sits not one amongst us, whose ancestor may not have been starved or bribed into his Protestantism. Therefore talk not to me,' cried the old nobleman, who was now worked up to a state of indignation, which no one attempted to soften or control ; " talk not to me, I say, of these unchristian meetings for rousing anew the evil passions of brother against brother—where one ignorant weak fanatic succeeds another, and silly women give their tears, their smiles, and their gold, for the truly feminine excitement of making mischief !"

This last sentence on the fair portion of the company broke up the lingering breakfast table—some laughing and defending the speakers and listeners so unsparingly condemned—others deeply pondering as they retired on what they had heard. Amongst the latter was Colonel Torrington, who, taking Lord Hervey's arm, drew him into an adjoining room, where they paced thoughtfully to and fro.

" Of course, it will be out of the question to press your father to preside at this meeting," said the Colonel.

" Yes !" replied Lord Hervey ; " I was not aware how strong and deep his feelings lay. He would certainly be a most unfit chairman, and mar the whole proceeding. We have a great escape, in his not having indulged his vein of practical humour, by consenting to our proposal, and concealing his projects, till it would have been too late to frustrate them."

" Do you still intend to patronize this meeting ?" said Colonel Torrington, with some hesitation.

" Still intend it !" cried Lord Hervey. " Why, Torrington, we must exert ourselves more than ever, against the weight which my father's quixotic support will throw into the opposite scale. It is wonderful what fascination Satan casts round that apostate Church, sometimes by the dazzling pomp and dignity of power, sometimes by the more subtle attraction of persecuted adversity. The public acts passed against popery seem to have been certainly severe even to cruelty ; but we are aiming at nothing of that sort. Our warfare is directed neither against the lives nor property of these unhappy victims of a false religion. Ours is the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God !"

" But has it never occurred to you, Hervey, that persons are permitted, nay, even invited, to speak at these meetings, who

make disgraceful mistakes in history, and, as far as I may venture to judge, in theology also? It appears to me exceedingly desirable, in our present conflict of opinion with Catholics, that we should not urge on them objections which cannot be proved, or take for granted that every departure from their faith is necessarily an approach to truth. I wish to heaven that none but well-informed persons were permitted to speak; and, by the bye, it would not be amiss if Tankerville were a little more accurate in his statements, and simple in his phraseology."

"And Colonel Torrington a little less fastidious, and more filled with zeal for the spread of gospel truth, so as not to make a man an offender for a word," replied Lord Hervey. "But come, my dear friend, prepare your own enlightened address now, while I write to Sir Thomas Belfast, who promised me to take the chair in case of my father's refusal."

CHAPTER IV.

That is the heart for thoughtful seer,
Watching in trance, nor dark nor clear,
The "uncertain" future as it nearer draws;
His spirit calm'd, the storm to meet,
Feeling the rock beneath his feet,
And tracing thro' the cloud th' eternal cause.

Keble.

IN the mean time, Geraldine had retired to her room, her whole mind engrossed by what had passed in the breakfast room. Did Lord Hervey really intend to speak at this meeting, and, after all the sufferings he had just heard detailed, to open anew a crusade against the Catholics, in spite of his parents' liberal and friendly feeling towards them? Who were to appear on the Catholic side of the question? and would they be allowed an uninterrupted hearing? On these points she had no means of gaining information, unless through Mr Everard, and she had seen him start on horseback for Burnleigh, immediately on leaving the breakfast-table. She thought, with regret, of that weakness of the chest which prevented this learned and candid old gentleman from speaking in public, and determined to prevail on him to find, if possible, some other enlightened Protestant, to stem the torrent of misrepresentation and invective which would be poured forth from the platform of the meeting in the town-hall of Elverton. She felt thankful that the invitation to

be chairman of the meeting, had roused Lord Hungerford to speak of, and read openly, all those facts which had so deeply interested her, and which she must have foregone, had she yielded to the wish of accompanying her Catholic friend to the service at Burnleigh.

Lady Winefride had arrived, at the usual time for the Mass on the week days; and, at that very hour when the persecutions of "her people" were being related at the priory, she was kneeling before the sanctuary at Burnleigh chapel, favoured by a participation in the most blessed mystery of the altar: and, after such communion with her God as a Catholic alone can know, the aged Christian was returning full of calm devotion to the Priory, when, in driving through the village of Sedgemoor, she saw, on a large placard, the same announcement which had occupied the thoughts of so many during that day. Lady Winefride gave a mournful smile, as she traced the same watchwords which had ruined the fortunes, corrupted the integrity, or broken the hearts, of those whose histories had been imprinted in her early memory. "Alarming increase of Popery"—"Principles of the glorious Reformation"—stood forth conspicuously in capitals, amid the smaller print, and furnished, not only thoughts of the past, but meditations for the future, till she joined our heroine in the drawing room of the Priory. The rest of the party had retired, to dress for dinner; but Geraldine, who was on the point of following their example, could not resist the unexpected boon of a short *tête-à-tête* with the almost inaccessible Lady Winefride, and joyfully greeting her, entreated her ladyship to grant her ten minutes' uninterrupted hearing.

"Do you wish me to subscribe to your Reformation Society?" said Lady Winefride smiling; "because it will not take me ten minutes to say—'No.'"

"What a setting at nought of all my confessions and confidences!" said Geraldine, also smiling, but vexed. "Why is it that you continue to elude my serious application to you, that you discourage my advance in the pursuit of what you, Lady Winefride, must think the only truth?—that you refuse to dispel the few remaining doubts which prevent my cordial reception of that vast, that wondrous scheme of God's dealings with man, received by Catholics?"

"These are heavy charges," replied Lady Winefride, still smiling benevolently on the eager countenance of her reprover.

"But indeed they are true," continued Geraldine. "I was reconciled to leaving my home, and, with it, the hope of a confidential communication with the pious and judicious priest of Elverton, simply because I concluded that your ladyship would be here. My heart leaped for joy, when I found my hopes realized, and perceived, by your kind greeting, that I was an object of some interest to you."

"And that indeed you are," interrupted Lady Winefride.

"But not in what regards my real welfare," continued Geraldine; "and I own that I am greatly disappointed and cast down."

"You are unused to disappointment or humiliation of any kind, I should conclude," said Lady Winefride; "and if so, this incomprehensible and provoking conduct of mine, in compelling you to abide by the judgment of another, will perhaps be a more profitable exercise in Christian attainment than the solving of some controversial difficulties."

"Then you are determined not to assist me, Lady Winefride?" said Geraldine, proudly yet mournfully. "Well! God can work without human means, and I will trust no longer to them; I can still read, and think, and pray."

"I have made no determination not to assist you," replied Lady Winefride; "but the time has not yet arrived for me to give you more than this passing advice, which is *not* to read, and *not* to think on those deep subjects, which have taken such possession of your mind during the past six months. Having done all that the head can do, now let the heart work;—resign it entirely into the hands of Him, who has already given you such proofs of his electing love;—pray that he will crown his rich gifts to you, by giving you that child-like simplicity and humility without which no one can become a Catholic!"

At this instant, Lord Hervey entered the room, and, notwithstanding the polite greeting which took place between him and Lady Winefride, his countenance betrayed the displeasure with which he again found her ladyship in private communication with Geraldine. The latter immediately withdrew to her toilette, partly touched and partly mortified, by the result of this last appeal to her Catholic friend, yet resolved, for a time, to follow her advice, and to cease from controversy. This, however, proved impossible.

In the evening, Mr Everard drew Geraldine aside, and told

that he had met several of the Catholic gentry that morning at Burnleigh, and that he believed none of them intended to be present, still less to speak, at the approaching Reformation meeting. "Some of them," added he, "laugh at these impotent attempts to keep the Protestant world in leading strings any longer, and consider that silence, on the part of the aspersed, is the most dignified proof of contempt, while those who do consider some condescension necessary from Catholics towards their ignorant countrymen, are deterred from appearing, by the notion that a fair hearing will not be granted them."

"I am sorry to hear this," replied Geraldine, "for there will be great triumph amongst the Protestant party, should the Catholics refuse to meet them. Such refusals are always given out to proceed from a latent sense of error, and a dread of open and manly discussion before the people."

At this instant, Lord Hervey joined them, saying, with an air of triumph, "So you see, Mr Everard, these cunning papists are afraid to meet us! Refusals have been sent from all the principal Romanists of the country, both priests and laymen. Error always skulks in the dark. And is not this enough in itself to decide between the parties? *We* are bold in the Lord, Miss Carrington!"

Geraldine felt that she could not reply with calmness, she was therefore silent; but Mr Everard said, "Rest assured, my Lord, that whenever the lawfully appointed heads and pastors of the Establishment invite a conference with the vicars-apostolic and bishops of the Catholic Church in England and Ireland, the challenge will meet with very different treatment."

"But we see otherwise," replied Lord Hervey; "for, when the invitation, with every possible concession on their part, was sent by the committee from Exeter Hall to Dr Murray, it was declined!"

"Of course it was?" said Mr Everard. "Who are the committee of Exeter Hall, that a Catholic bishop should leave the important duties of a distant see, to meet a party, who, though nominally in the Church of England, advance opinions which undermine their own Church equally with his—a party unauthorized by their own spiritual rulers? Let however, the archbishops and bishops of the English Protestant Church assemble in Exeter Hall, or where you will, with a duly appointed chairman, and you will find no reluctance on the part of the Catholic dignitaries to

meet them in conference, while the Catholic laity will throng the meeting. But pray, Lord Hervey, are you aware of the circumstances attending the last bear-garden held at Elverton, called a Reformation Meeting, at which several of the neighbouring Catholics were present, both of the priesthood and laity?"

"I heard there was some clamour," replied his Lordship; "but I was abroad at the time, and know no particulars."

"Then I will give you some," said the old gentleman, raising his voice to gain a larger audience, in which he succeeded to his full wishes, Lady Winefride alone remaining in the adjoining drawing-room. "The facts were these:—At the first Reformation Meeting in the town of Elverton, several of the hearers were Catholics; and the priest of that place joining the party on the platform, had prepared to speak towards the close of the meeting. Before, however, he could advance in his turn, so many mis-statements and invectives had been uttered, and the ignorant crowd below had been so much excited by inflammatory eloquence, that, when Mr Bernard's name was announced as the 'Roman Catholic Priest,' a general groan was heard—his speech was interrupted by comments—he was not allowed to know his own creed, still less to explain it—he was accused of compromising and palliating in favour of the monster Popery, though he quoted from the catechisms—and tumult and uproar continued,—till, coughed, and groaned, and hissed to silence, Mr Bernard left the meeting! With this experience of the candour and politeness to be expected from a wilfully prejudiced party, the Catholic priests declined attending the next anniversary meeting; whereupon these Reformation gentry boasted, as they do now, that they had invited the Popish priests to attend the meeting, but that dreading to encounter a fair discussion before the public, they preferred carrying on their proselyting system in secret, which the Elverton priest, in particular, was doing to an alarming extent in the town. Now, with respect to this proselytism, here was again a perversion of the truth, which was this. Mr Bernard, on receiving the summons last year to attend another meeting, wrote word to the secretary and committee of the Reformation Society, that he felt it to be more profitable to the humble seeker after truth, and more in keeping with his holy office, to avoid all wrangling and contentious meetings; and, instead of again appearing on the platform of their assembly, he intended to preach at that time a series of controversial sermons in his chapel, when those who had

attended the Reformation meeting, and wished in candour to hear both sides of a question, were invited to listen to a simple exposition of the doctrines held by Catholics. Well! I believe many of the present company have heard what follows—that the little chapel was so beset, that, although the windows were taken out on the meadow side, yet the crowd extended far beyond the reach of Mr Bernard's voice; and that, disappointed in hearing his public explanation, many went to him for private instruction. They have heard of the conversions which followed—of the consternation of the Reformation party—of the fulminations from the Evangelical and Dissenting pulpits—of the rising of the mob—of the driving the priest from the town, and the arrival of the cholera, and the remorse and terror which recalled Mr Bernard—and have quieted all persecution, till, now, this Christmas meeting gives the signal for fresh outrage!"

"Dear me," cried the languid bride, Lady Anne Scotney, to her husband, "how very amusing! and how very fortunate," added she in a whisper, "that all this should happen just at this time, when I expected to be so dull!"

"I declare," exclaimed Mrs Torrington, "that I should like, above all things, to make a party, and go to this meeting. I have never seen an English Catholic priest in all my life, and we should have so much to talk over afterwards, which makes a Christmas party pass off so well!"

"Certainly, Mrs Torrington," said Sir John Scotney, "you have every claim to be there, for that hapless husband of yours has been entrapped to make a speech against the very ogre you wish so much to see, but who perchance may eat you both up!"

"Oh, Henry! are you really going to make a speech?" cried Mrs Torrington, laughing; "then I *must* go. Dear Lady Hungerford, do you ever encounter the noise and mixed company of these places—and will you form a party, and include me? I believe people are required to have an order, or tickets, or something; but here is Lord Hervey, who is all-powerful. Are you to be chairman, my Lord?"

"No," replied his Lordship smiling; "but I can give as many little pink and green talismans, as will ensure your having good seats, where you may see and hear everything that goes forward."

Lord Hervey now rang the bell, and dispatched a servant to his rooms for a packet of cards, which, after presenting one to Mrs Torrington, he placed in his mother's hands, saying, "Oh,

course, you will keep the reserved tickets for your own party ; but the green cards will also secure very good seats for any of the household, who may value the good cause sufficiently to go to this meeting."

Lord Hervey scarcely listened to Lady Hungerford's reply about the sixteen miles, and the short days, his eye resting at that moment on another packet of admittance tickets, tied by a harp string, and lying by some embroidery, which he well knew belonged to Geraldine. "Miss Carrington," continued he, "will perhaps include in *her* party some of our guests?"

Geraldine looked up from the chess board, where Miss Graham and Colonel Torrington were endeavouring to play with attention, and drawing from the packet two of the tickets, presented the rest to Lord Hervey, saying, "Miss Graham wishes to take one, the other is for my own maid ; the remainder of the tickets are entirely at the service of the party present."

"But," said Lord Hervey, "are you not aware that each individual must have a ticket, and that, if you retain two only, you will yourself be left unprovided?"

Geraldine smiled at this pretended misunderstanding, and merely replied, "Two are all I shall require."

"But, my dear," said Lady Hungerford, "do you not mean to be one of the party? I thought you seemed so much interested this morning, when the meeting was announced—and all these doctrinal points are so much more suited to you than to me. I do not like these things, in general, as I said at breakfast, because hitherto they have produced ill-will amongst Christians—and also, I feel something due to my friend Lady Winefride, while she is my guest : but my dear Hervey tells me, that every thing will this time be conducted in the mildest way possible ; that any respectable Catholic will be allowed to speak, who sends his name and address to the committee, and that none of that vulgar clamour will be permitted which Mr Everard has just described. Perhaps, my love, you will oblige me by going, as the rest do, and not appearing singular. I assure you that, but for Lady Winefride, and the chill of returning in the evening air, after my illness, I should be much tempted to go myself, for I have never yet heard my son speak in public."

"I can scarcely hope that Miss Carrington would find, in my feeble efforts, any inducement to listen to a cause she has so little at heart," said Lord Hervey, in a low tone to Geraldine.

"My Lord," replied she, "I do but agree with your father, in disliking these meetings, and no graces of oratory, no flights of eloquence, could reconcile me to them."

Lord Hervey was about to reply, when Colonel Torrington, having been check-mated by Katherine, drew him aside, to show him a note from Major Tankerville; and Geraldine made her escape to the piano, where she sang alternately with Mrs Torrington and Miss Scotney, till the hour of retiring.

"My dear Geraldine," said Katherine, when their attendants had retired for the night, "I think you seem scarcely aware of how much your sentiments are known in favour of the Romish Church. Every thing has been reported to Lady Hungerford—by whom I know not; first, of your disgust at the vacillation and disputes in the evangelical body; next, of your conference with your high Church uncle, the Warden; then of your determination to read and judge for yourself; and, lastly,—would you believe it,—of our private excursion that evening to the Vesper service in the little chapel at Elverton. All is matter for perpetual, though whispered, comment and conjecture with the guests here, and of long and serious discussions between Lord Hervey and his mother."

"When did you become aware of this?" said Geraldine.

"Not till this morning," replied Miss Graham; "when, on leaving the breakfast-table, Lady Hungerford invited me to her morning room, to my great surprise, for I know myself incapable of being a favourite. However, I suspected the truth, from the anxious looks she gave you during the reading of those statutes against the Catholics; the more so, as she told me, because you blushed so deeply, when Lord Hungerford attacked you about young de Grey."

"I believe I was the object of Lord Hungerford's joke, merely because I sate the nearest to him," said Geraldine: "and I coloured only because—Lord Hervey was watching me."

"How did you know that?"

"I felt it!" said Geraldine, turning away.

"I am happy to hear of that intuitive sympathy," returned Katherine, laughing; "but, my dear, if you blush, merely because Lord Hervey watches you, your cheeks might be of a perpetual damask."

"I wish," said Geraldine, after musing for some minutes, "that I might publish that engagement between Sir Eustace de

Grey and his cousin. I cannot think why Lady Winefride imparted the secret to me, and to no one else !”

“ If I did not think that old lady very deep,” returned Katherine, “ I might give her credit for honourable motives in this : as it is, I think she invented this engagement to put you off your guard in your acquaintance with her nephew.”

“ Charity thinketh no evil,” said Geraldine ; “ and, if I were to tell you the rebuffs I have received from Lady Winefride, whenever I have sought to engage her in controversy, the advice she has constantly given me to pray, and not to argue ; and the generous tribute she renders to Lord Hervey’s piety and zeal, you would own how much are you warped by religious—or rather antireligious prejudice. Once only have I pronounced the name of her nephew, and a shade immediately passed over her countenance :—she never mentions him,”

Neither let us mention him,” said Katherine impatiently ; “ I wish to forget his very existence, if possible. And now, Geraldine, to the subject of this approaching meeting. It is so much the wish of Lady Hungerford that you should go, as the rest of the party here intend to do, and it will appear so open an avowal of Catholicism if you do not, that I do wish you would sacrifice your own will for once, to oblige others !”

“ For *once* !” repeated Geraldine. “ Why, Katherine, your estimation of your friend is at a low ebb indeed. But I feel for you my poor Kate, and can quite understand your irritation at my present conduct and position. Let us now say ‘ good night,’ and, when we meet to-morrow, I will you give my decision, which very possibly may be consent.”

CHAPTER V.

A thousand probabilities cannot make one truth.

Italian Proverb.

AT length the day arrived for the now annual meeting of the Branch Reformation Society, in the town of Elverton, and the arrival and entertainment of the speakers from London—that centre of unity !! The previous tea-parties, and expositions of the Prophet Daniel and the Apocalypse, together with some fresh horrors from Ireland, and a bazaar to be held in aid of the impoverished funds, all united to raise expectation and excitement to fever heat, especially amongst the ladies of the town

and its neighbourhood. A goodly train of equipages started from Sedgemoor Priory, amongst which appeared the Carrington arms, giving, with the reluctant presence of Geraldine, apparent sanction and approval to the Reformation cause from the principal family of the place. This barouche contained, besides its owner and Miss Graham, the ever-animated Mr Everard; but just as they were driving from the hall door, Lord Hervey called to the servants to stop, and leaning on the door of the carriage,—“I beg your pardon,” said he, “for detaining you, Miss Carrington, but there has been some great mistake! How comes Mr Everard here? I reckoned on a seat in his britzka, and find it full of women-servants.”

“Why, where is your own carriage?” said Mr Everard, full of glee.

“Full likewise, within and without. I gave it up to the steward’s room; and they have started this hour, to secure seats. I made sure of a tête-à-tête with you.”

“Then, my lord, you know but little of my gallantry!” replied the old gentleman.

“Lady Hungerford wishes to know, my lord, whether any thing is the matter,” said a servant, advancing hastily to the carriage. During this parley, Miss Graham had removed the shawls and furs which had filled the corner opposite to her, and Mr Everard, taking the hint, had edged himself into it, leaving vacant the seat next the now opened door, and fronting that in which sate the grave and silent Geraldine.

“Do you not think there will be snow, Mr Everard?” said Katherine, with a woman’s adroitness, looking, and engaging her opposite companion to look, away from Lord Hervey and Geraldine, through the window next her.

“You are resolved, then, not to invite my entrance,” said Lord Hervey, in a low murmur, to the fair owner of the equipage, “and not for worlds would I intrude on you. How long would it take,” said he aloud, “to get horses from Sedgemoor?”

“They don’t keep horses, my lord, at Sedgemoor, but at Burnleigh: it would be a good three quarters of an hour.”

“Mr Everard,” said Lord Hervey, “you will have the start of me, and all I ask of your generosity is, to beg of Tankerville to make use of these papers, if he require them; and to stand up manfully till I join him.”

“My lord,” said Geraldine, at length vanquished, “I wish

neither to be discourteous, nor to indulge in any party spirit. It is expected that you should open the meeting, and I hope that you will do so by accompanying us."

At these words Lord Hervey sprang into the carriage, which rapidly followed the other equipages, and silence for a time was unbroken, after the tardy reply of Mr Everard to Miss Graham, accompanied by one of his arch looks:—"No! after all, I do not think there will be snow!"

Like most of those, whose minds are engaged on great and lofty topics, Geraldine was easy even to carelessness in the ordinary affairs of life; and the benevolence and sweetness of her temper, which led her to prefer the comfort and pleasure of others to her own, made her '*facile à vivre*' even to a...characteristic,—we cannot bring ourselves to call it a fault. This pliancy, however, of disposition, in things of inferior moment, has its inconveniencies, and had placed Geraldine that morning in what modern politicians term a 'false position:' but those who had teased and fondled her into it, had gained nothing on her convictions, and she continued to lean back in deep thought, connected with her future avowal of the Catholic faith; while Lord Hervey, seemingly intent on the notes for his intended speech, to which he continued his pencil corrections, awaited the moment in which he might address some prefatory discourse to Geraldine, calculated to dispose her to listen with more pleasure and approbation to the speakers of that day, than he feared she was inclined to do. The silence was first broken by Mr Everard's remarking, that the coachman had, in the Irish phrase, taken his 'morning,' or, that the horses were restive, to which Miss Graham replied, that, from the unequal motion of the carriage, she rather thought that one of the springs was giving way. It soon became apparent, even to the two who were the most abstracted, that something was the matter, and Lord Hervey, grasping Geraldine's hand, entreated her not to be alarmed.

"I scarcely ever am," was her calm reply: but she vainly endeavoured to withdraw her hand, which was only the more firmly detained, as it became still more evident that something threatened their overturn. One of the servants from the seat behind had succeeded in alighting, and, as the horses had now stopped, to rear and kick, he opened the door, and letting down the steps, entreated his young mistress to descend, half lifting her from the carriage; Lord Hervey sprang after her, and

scarcely had he done so, when the horses plunged forward, and soon bore the vehicle nearly out of sight, till, at the foot of a steep hill, the rearing and kicking recommenced.

"What is the cause of all this?" said Lord Hervey to the servant.

"One of the wheelers is new to the rest, my lord, and is restive with them. He has always been a leader, and wants to get on, so he bites the horse before him."

Geraldine and Lord Hervey both smiled, as some moral comparisons crossed their minds, and the former's anxiety respecting the fate of her two friends, ceased, as she perceived that the other groom had succeeded in freeing the restive horse, and was now holding him by the rein. "They seem to have now got the horses quiet," said she; "but why was any change made in the old set?"

"The coachman only found out this morning, ma'am, that the near wheeler had lost a shoe, and my lord's groom lent him a horse. The coachman has got them quiet now, I think, ma'am, and will change him with a leader, and all will go smooth."

"Go on," said Lord Hervey, "to give your assistance; and tell Miss Graham and Mr Everard, not to return for us, for that we shall soon join them."

The man obeyed, and Lord Hervey, with Geraldine on his arm, followed, more slowly than was absolutely necessary, which the latter perceiving, said,—“I fear, my lord, that you will be late at the Town Hall.”

"Oh no!" replied he; "we shall probably go on now at a very rapid pace, and great as my wish is to advance, by my presence, and my exhortations, so good a cause, yet I consider it as much forwarded, in this instance, by pleading with one soul, as by addressing hundreds. And when I consider the destiny of that soul while yet on earth, her influence over others, and the great preponderance she must ever hold, from those attractions which far outweigh the gifts of fortune,—oh! Miss Carrington, I cannot but entreat you to listen dispassionately to all you will hear to-day!"

"I do not conceal from you," replied Geraldine, "that I attend this meeting with great reluctance. I have been so highly favoured in hearing the controversial arguments of my uncle and Mr Everard, that it will be in a spirit of endurance,

not of inquiry, that I shall listen to the comparatively ignorant speakers of to-day."

"Pardon me," said Lord Hervey eagerly, "but I consider the Warden to hold the most *legal* and anti-scriptural views of Gospel truth: and, as for our friend, Everard, his state is truly alarming. You have been placed in most dangerous hands. Oh! if I dared hope—if I dared advise—God alone is witness of the heart-felt interest——"

"I will not inquire," said Geraldine, "by what means your lordship became informed of my late studies, and of the conviction, gradually admitted, of the truth of Catholicity; for I am more anxious to explain what I really do believe, and to ask from you a patient hearing——"

"I dare not—I dare not. I have no right to tamper with error, the more dangerous, because imparted by your lips. I could not listen to you unmoved; and though I believe nothing **could make that soul fall away** which has been once born anew in the Lord, yet I should doubtless be punished by vacillation and distress of mind."

"Have you never listened to argument, or even explanation, from any Catholic? Are you condemning that of which you are ignorant, and in that ignorance, avowed and gloried in, are you preparing to address hundreds within an hour?—Oh! Lord Hervey, can this be rational—can it be Christian?"

"I cannot plead ignorance," said he, "while, in the precious Word of life, I see the prophetic description of the great apostacy, and the warning to God's people, to 'come out from Babylon, that they be not partakers of her plagues.'"

"But, supposing that, by the same Divine Word, I see every reason to appropriate to the ancient and unchangeable Catholic Church, all those beautiful and touching prophecies, respecting the true Spouse of Christ, to be found also in the Révelation, as well as in other parts of the Scripture, and that I do not admit, from historical fact, that *Christian* Rome and Babylon are the same."

"Do not let us argue to-day," said Lord Hervey, again slackening his pace, "we shall have enough of that; but tell me—if I dare ask, and pardon me, if I encroach on the long friendship of our families—has no undue influence been attempted, in leading you to think thus?"

"My arguments have been held entirely with Protestants, up

to this time," replied Geraldine. "It is true that I have frequently sought Lady Winefride, for explanation on some points which I do not yet understand; but she has decidedly declined giving me the assistance I require."

"For what reason?" said Lord Hervey, much surprised.

"Because she thinks that I have read, and thought, and argued, quite enough, and that my only part now, is constant and fervent prayer."

"Prayer! yes, prayer to the Virgin and the saints, who can no more help you, than these stones and brambles. A papist knows not what is prayer."

"The Roman Catholic begs the prayers of his glorified brethren, but he also, and principally, prays for himself to the Lord of all power and might."

"I do not understand these distinctions and subtleties," replied Lord Hervey impatiently.

"And yet you understand the distinction between loving your father, and loving God.—You do not confound these two feelings."

"Tell me," said Lord Hervey; "are you personally acquainted with the young papist, who has just fitted up the ruined abbey near Elverton, as a chapel and dwelling-house for the priest?"

"Who has done this?" asked Geraldine, in her turn.

"Do you not know then?" was the additional inquiry of Lord Hervey.

"No; I only suspect it to be Sir Eustace de Grey."

"You do know him, then?" said he.

"Very slightly," replied Geraldine.

Lord Hervey drew his breath, as though he kept silence most painfully, and stopped within a few yards of the carriage, into which Mr Everard had now handed Miss Graham, all being pronounced "quite right and safe" by the servants.

If, however, his lordship had wished to address some last words to Geraldine, he was still prevented by some stronger feeling, and he suddenly walked quickly forward, and assisted her into the carriage, taking his seat as before; and little was said by any of the party, except on the neutral subject of the restive horse, till they drove up the High-Street of Elverton, and stopped at the entrance of the Town Hall.

Although they had arrived half an hour before the chair was

to be taken, the Hall was crowded, and the difficulty of entrance was extreme. At length, however, the pink tickets, and the names of the party, secured a free passage to the reserved seats, and Geraldine found herself once more amongst the well-known faces of the "serious world" at Elverton, being introduced to their recognition under false colours, which completely baffled them. Lord Hervey seemed determined to make his escort as conspicuous as possible, not only remaining by Geraldine's side, and thence bowing or nodding to his friends on the platform, but greeting also the fair party from the Priory, who had secured seats on the opposite side, and those also, who, later than himself, were toiling past him up the narrow and impeded path. Amongst these was the already oft-mentioned Major Tankerville, brother to the late Lady Hervey, and confessor-general to the serious coteries of Grosvenor Square and Park Lane. His half-shut eyes expanded with so much surprise and pleasure, on seeing Miss Carrington, that it was evident, that her state of mind was known to him; and, notwithstanding Geraldine's chilling manner, he ran over the usual commonplaces against the 'great apostacy,' 'Babylon,' 'delusion of works,' &c. &c., till some one inquired, who was to take the chair, for it was reported that Sir Thomas Belfast had the gout?

"Yes!" replied Major Tankerville, "unfortunately, the meeting cannot have the benefit of his presence, and, as Lord Hungerford declines, we have voted the great county proprietor, Lord —, to take the chair. Not that he has precisely those clear views, that I should wish, but he has great popular eloquence, and is a staunch advocate of Reformation principles against anti-Christ."

"And have I really been so daring, or so weak, (for I know not which to call it) as to consent to listen to all this stupid invective, during three coming hours at least, and with but a slender chance of either Catholic explanation, or Protestant candour?" thought Geraldine, as the gentlemen now left her, to mount the platform.

"Pray, may I inquire," said an unknown lady to Geraldine, "who are the two gentlemen who attended you here? I should not presume to ask, but that I have frequently seen them at the London meetings, during the first week in May, and therefore look on them as public characters."

"Lord Hervey and Major Tankerville," replied Geraldine.

"Ah! they are well known to me by report, as being indeed brothers in the Lord, and doubtless they are raised up for great purposes in these awful times of popish revival," was the reply, followed by the question,—“have you heard what prayers are to be used, and whether any hymn will be sung?”

To this Geraldine could not reply; but another lady, hearing the question, turned round, and informed them, that, as there had been such dissensions about the prayers, it had been at length agreed upon, between the Church party and the orthodox dissenters, to use only the ‘Lord’s-prayer,’ and ‘Doxology,’ with the ‘Old Hundredth Psalm.’

At this instant, the signal was given from the platform, the whole assembly rose, and, in his touching and sonorous voice, the Rev. Edmund Sinclair, as minister of the parish, gave forth the model for all prayer. Geraldine’s heart beat with a variety of emotions during its recital, especially when, at the close, she looked up, and saw the countenance of this beloved relative irradiated with heartfelt devotion.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” at length began the noble chairman, “the fulness and respectability of this meeting is most cheering and inspiring to my heart, and gives me every confidence, that, under the blessing of heaven, this town, from its central and important position, and from the zeal of its inhabitants, may prove of increasing importance, and a source of blessing to the land.” (Hear! hear! from the principal tradespeople and innkeepers of Elverton.) “And I say,” continued his lordship, “that never was there a time, in the history of England, when the true zeal and courage of her sons were more required against a dangerous and implacable foe, than at the present era! a foe that threatens us again with those chains, from which our forefathers so nobly freed us—a foe, that is as subtle as he is cruel; as ungrateful as he is treacherous; as cowardly as he is cunning. This foe, my friends, this foe is Popery! (cheers at the climax) and, my friends, let me impress on your national and loyal hearts, that we want no foreign importation into our free island, (hear!) no tampering with our glorious constitution. (Hear! hear!) We do not require foreign priests, and foreign faith, to teach us our duty towards God and the king. (Hear! hear! hear!) No! my friends, Popery is no Englishman!! (Immense cheering.) We are here assembled, in the name of the dauntless Luther, to trace

the ignorance, the superstition, the idolatry, that he once overthrew. (Hear!) We invoke the spirit of the great Reformer, for the same glorious work. What was their cause, is our cause, and their watchword is our watchword—the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible!!!”

The noble lord sate down amidst immense cheering, and the treasurer to the society advanced, to hope, in his turn, that the funds, which were very low, would be replenished by the pious liberality of the assembly. “For,” added he, “the rapid increase of the Roman Catholic religion among all classes of society, and the multiplication of their places of worship, equalled only by the coldness and indifference of Protestants, throw a weight on the British society, for promoting the religious principles of the Reformation, which they feel unequal to bear.”

The treasurer then read the statement of the receipts and expenditure of the past year; and again addressing the audience, said,—“That the committee had deputed him, to express their final conviction, that the most imperious necessity required the exertions of those, who love the principles of the Bible, and glory in the religion of the Cross.—Their debt is large, near eight hundred pounds, and their spirits depressed, by the painful necessity of their continued appeals.”

After the treasurer had sat down, the secretary arose, to read the report of the labours of the society during the preceding year, in which their marches, and counter-marches, being productive of but two instances of seeming success, these anecdotes were thrown into a species of historical romance, for the excited and delighted ladies of Elverton. The horrors of popery, the cruel tyranny of the priests, the ignorant, deluded peasantry, formed subjects for eloquent declamation; but the actual facts were simply these: first, that a Catholic labourer, having quarrelled with his priest, had gone to America with his child, to read his Bible, and judge for himself of the true faith! (hear! hear!): second, that a Catholic priest himself had borrowed some controversial tracts from the Reformation Society, (hear! hear!) and had been heard to say, that he found much subject for thought in them. (Hear! hear! hear!)

Geraldine found it impossible here to repress a smile, but the multitude around her saw no barrenness of material in the report; the fancy being warmed, and the ear pleased, by the accompanying phrases of—“And though we cannot positively

say. &c., yet we may confidently hope," &c. "The Lord's arm is not shortened, that it cannot save." "We know in whom we trust. "We must not despise the day of small things," &c. In this way was filled a respectably sized manuscript, which at length was wound up by reading the first motion of the day:—"That the report be printed," &c.; and the secretary, before retiring to his seat, now announced Viscount Hervey!

Great cheering welcomed the young nobleman, and Geraldine, notwithstanding her disapproval of the active part he was taking, against what she now received as the truth, found herself listening with breathless attention to the opening of his speech, which, elegantly worded, and full of devout feeling, was yet delivered with great timidity; and, while at each hesitation she felt her heart beat with anxiety, a smile of satisfaction lighted up her speaking countenance, when, after repeated plaudits of encouragement, from the platform and the audience below, Lord Hervey mastered his nervous sensations, and entered with warmth into that branch of the subject, to which he had especially devoted his attention before entering the lists against the Catholic faith, namely, the fatal error inculcated by that "false Church," that man's works have in them any merit, instead of relying solely for justification on the Saviour, and living by faith in him.

No longer rendered anxious by an inexplicable wish for his public success, Geraldine could now give her whole attention to the subject, apart from the man, and mourned, as she listened to the extraordinary misapprehension of each other's accredited and published sentiments, existing between the Catholic and Protestant Church, on this never-ending topic of 'Faith and Works.' She recalled to mind her researches into the 'Faith of Catholics,' and the following declaration respecting 'Justification, and the merit of good works:—'"When man has sinned, the remission or pardon of sin is not attainable by him otherwise, than in and by the merits and sufferings of Jesus Christ, who freely purchased our ransom. Secondly, it is only through the same merits of Jesus Christ, that the just man can obtain either an increase of holiness in this life, or eternal happiness in the next. Thirdly, the good works of a just man proceeding from grace and charity, are so far acceptable to God, through his goodness and sacred promises, as to be truly deserving an eternal reward, God crowning his own gifts when he crowns the

good works of his servants. The merits of Christ, though infinite in themselves, are not applied to us without a right faith in him." Geraldine also perfectly remembered the extract she had made from the Council of Trent, on the subject of 'Justification by Faith,' and the reward promised to 'good works.' "Though no man can be just but he to whom the merits of the passion of Christ are communicated, yet this is done in the justification of the sinner, when, by the merit of that passion, the charity of God is infused into the hearts of them that are justified, and dwells therein: whence, together with the remission of sins, man receives, through Jesus Christ, the virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity. Wherefore, to them who do well unto the end, eternal life ought to be proposed, both as a grace which is mercifully promised to them, through Jesus Christ, and as a recompense of their good works and merits in virtue of this promise. And, as Jesus Christ perpetually sheds his influence on them that are justified, which influence *precedes*, and accompanies, and follows, all their good works, and without which no works can be pleasing to God, we must believe that nothing is now wanting to render them deserving of eternal life, provided they depart this life in the fear of God. Although in the Scriptures good works are so much valued, that Jesus Christ himself promises, that a cup of cold water shall not lose its reward, and the apostle testifies, that a momentary pain endured in this world, shall produce an eternal weight of glory; nevertheless, God forbid that a Christian should trust or glory in himself, and not in the Lord, whose bounty is so great to all men, that he will have those gifts which he bestows upon them to be their merits."

Geraldine, whose deep interest in this subject had enabled her to retain all this explicit declaration of the last council of the Catholic Church, now also recalled as accurately the twelfth article of the English Church, as follows:—"Albeit that good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment, yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith, insomuch, that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known, as a tree by its fruit." All this passed through the region of Geraldine's comparison and judgment; and although, in every difference between the ancient universal Church, and

that of England, she now saw reason to abide implicitly by the former, yet she could not but wonder at the wide breach between them on this question of 'Faith and Works,' which could only be accounted for by the great advance of Calvinistic principles, which, instead of being confined to one article, (the seventeenth) in the Church of England, was creeping over the whole. From these recollections and reflections Geraldine was recalled to the speech, by the repeated applause it produced ; and she suffered her attention no more to wander.

Lord Hervey continued to expose what he really took for granted to be the fatal self-righteousness of the Catholics (never having read their books, nor listened to a word of explanation, nor attended their service, in his life) ; and it was with a mixture of indignation and sorrow that Geraldine heard those hackneyed falsehoods repeated and enforced from the lips of him, whose piety demanded her respect, and whose tenderness towards herself, had produced a feeling of interest and gratitude, which made her listen with a painful conflict of feeling. Towards the close, however, of his speech, Lord Hervey expanded into several beautiful expressions of his hope, that those, his erring brethren, might be brought to serve the Saviour in simplicity and truth, and that the devout of that Church (for he would not doubt there were such) might receive grace to become as lights to the rest. To such he would say, as Jesus did to Peter,—“When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” Scarcely had Lord Hervey resumed his seat, amidst general applause, on the right hand of the chairman, when Major Tankerville, who was then announced, began by expressing his sorrow at finding himself necessitated to differ on one point, and on one point only, from his noble and highly-esteemed friend, who had just addressed the meeting. He (Major Tankerville) felt convinced that a little explanation was alone required : but, at the close of the speech, his noble friend had not quite clearly expressed his views of the Saviour's kingdom, that it was a ‘little flock’—‘that many were called, but few chosen ;’ that we were commanded to ‘come out and be separated,’ and to ‘touch not the unclean thing.’ At these words, Lord Hervey rose to explain, that he entirely agreed with his gallant friend, adding a few words, which appeared to satisfy the Major ; who now proceeded to prove, not only that Catholics were anti-Christians, but that three-quarters of the Protestants then listening to him,

were 'children of wrath;' that, in fact, the 'little flock' would prove much smaller than even many regenerated persons supposed, whose views were still confused, and who judged of the Almighty by their own corrupt hearts, instead of by the text of Scripture. "Alas!" thought Geraldine, "how is that sacred volume desecrated by the presumptuous appropriation of its meaning by every flippant reader."

But Major Tankerville had not yet reduced the number of the elect to that select half dozen, self-included, to which, after an hour's quoting, and proving, and denouncing, he finally limited salvation, much to his own satisfaction, and to that of the so-called 'serious party' in Elverton, many of whom were seated near Geraldine, and who, after nodding and elbowing their assent and sympathy, gave utterance at length to their feelings in a loud and lengthened tribute to the Major's theology, that again sent our heroine into a pondering fit. But it was now a philosophical inquiry into that love of safety, which is enhanced by the danger and distress of others, and had just arrived at the conviction, that selfishness is the mother of Calvinism, when a fresh speaker was announced—the Rev. Dr Dunning from Bristol. To him succeeded a Rev. Mr Smithson, from Birmingham; and thirdly, a Mr Small, from Quebec. These two last were dissenters. Each began by assuring the audience that he could say nothing after what had been so ably said, &c., yet each hammered on the railing of the platform, during a weary half hour, while he "trusted," and "felt convinced," and "considered," and "entirely agreed," and "gave his tribute," and spoke of the "mar of sin," and of "anti-Christ," and of the "mystery of iniquity," and of "Babylon," till weariness stole over the assembly, and many of the party from Sedgemoor Priory were devising means of escape, when, as the last diluted repetitions of Mr Small drew to a close, some animated discussion apparently took place among the gentlemen on the platform, with frequent references to the chair. Mr Everard was seen to advance and succeed Major Tankerville in gaining the ear of the noble chairman, and at length Lord ——— arose, and announced to the meeting, that he had the pleasure to introduce Sir Eustace de Grey, a Catholic proprietor of that county!

CHAPTER VI.


Without history a man is purblind, seeing only the things which almost touch his eyes.

Fuller.

LITTLE had Geraldine expected that any thing from that platform could have softened the proud calm, the stern endurance, with which she had nerved herself to bear the torrent of misapprehension and invective, which had been and was still to be, poured forth on that day; and those alone who have known what it is to become apparently blunted in feeling, from meeting with constant disapproval and opposition of opinion, can understand the sudden gush of tears, which filled Geraldine's eyes, as she saw, amidst the crowded assembly, one who felt as she felt! These were happy tears!

"My Lord," said Sir Eustace, addressing the chairman, "I thank you for your liberality, which has permitted a member of an aspersed Church to stand up in her defence, and to offer some explanation of the infatuation, or, if you please, madness, which could induce an Englishman of independence and education to glory in the name of Catholic! In you, my Lord, I address a layman, and therefore, to your opening speech of popular eloquence will I confine myself, while, leaving to a far abler expositor than myself the *doctrines* of the ancient Church, I reply to the challenge your Lordship holds out respecting the influence of the Catholic faith on the honour, the bravery, the national independence, and constitutional laws of England. As truth is every man's property, it is essential to the common good, that each one should regard it with veneration, and carefully seek its defence against every assailant; for in every storm it is a shelter, in every danger a panoply, in every battle a refuge, and a balm in every time of trouble. Whatever side a man may take, if clad in this armour, he will 'never be ashamed to meet his enemy in the gate.' Still, in a conflict, in which each side not only claims, but may honestly think they possess, the truth, the only touchstone is historical record, and facts, not sentiments, must be our aim.

"Let me then first ask who granted to Englishmen the famous trial by jury, and laid the foundation of our boasted Constitution? The *Catholic* Alfred! Who gained for them Magna Charta? The *Catholic* barons of England, with a *Catholic* archbishop at

Yes glory in the law and 

their head.—Who won the glorious fields of Cressy, Poitiers, and Agincourt? The *Catholic* armies of our land, under our *Catholic* Edwards and Henry. And let me farther ask, had the Catholic Irish been withdrawn from our men-of-war, or from the ranks of our armies, on the eve of the modern achievements of British valour—what would have been the fate of those desperately contested battles?—what would have been the issue of Aboukir, of Trafalgar, of the fields of the Peninsula? It would not have been even *doubtful* at Waterloo!”—(hear, hear.)

“My dear countrymen, contemplate for an instant the true position of the Catholic soldier or sailor, and then judge of his patriotism, and of his bravery. During the whole of the late wars, the heavy yoke of spiritual tyranny forbade his ever aspiring to a post of trust and glory—yet he fought on! He knew that he must hopelessly endure, in addition to the humiliation of inferior rank, the scoffs and banterings, and often the open insults, of the favoured Protestant—yet he fought on! That noble ambition, which has ever led to brighter deeds than mere animal courage, that ambition was denied him—yet he fought for England’s glory; he merged himself in his country’s fame!” (Applause.)

—“Nor is this all. There have been times when the heavily taxed and impoverished Catholic nobleman or gentleman, has entered so zealously into the martial spirit of the day, as to drain his remaining resources to fit out a company of volunteers, the command of which (it being denied himself) he must necessarily give to a Protestant, while he fought in the ranks!—and doubtless, while he did so—a contemned and despised Catholic—the pure offering he made his country was viewed by the countless armies of heaven, and the laurels denied him here, were laid up in store for the brave Machabee! My lord, I would farther observe, in reply to your lordship’s remark, that ‘Popery is no Englishman,’ that ‘a nation may be in possession of the truth, but truth is not national!’*—(‘Bravo!’ cried the sympathetic voice of Mr Everard from the back of the platform.)—“The Catholic Englishman cherishes his country—can sacrifice self-interest to her glory—can die in her defence: but his expansive creed teaches him to love all mankind, especially those of the ‘household of faith,’ which, in his universal Church, are of every

* A remark by the author of “Four years in France,” the able and lamented Mr Best, formerly a clergyman of the Church of England, and a convert to the Catholic Church

tribe and every nation. Far be from him that narrow-minded exclusiveness, that spreading out of self, which can see nothing good out of England, because he was born in England, and, obstinately refusing to see the vices of his land, opens his eyes to nothing but the corruptions of other nations. I have listened to several declarations to-day, from the speakers who have preceded me, that the chief pastor of the Catholic Church was Antichrist: but"—(here Sir Eustace was stopped by an amendment from Lord Hervey, that the 'office,' and not the 'person,' of the Pope was Antichrist, as proved by Scripture. Sir Eustace bowed and proceeded.) "If the office of a visible head to Christ's Church be antichristian, the following deductions are inevitable:—First, that England was converted to Christianity by Antichrist! Pope Gregory having sent Augustine, with other missionaries, for that purpose, in the year 590: Secondly. That the 'Man of Sin' also preached repentance and grace to Ireland, Pope Celestin having sent St Patrick thither for that purpose: And lastly, That heathen nations were everywhere converted to the 'religion of the cross,' and 'to the mark of the beast; ' at the same instant, it being an historical fact, that no missionaries went forth excepting those in communion with Rome, until the sixteenth century. Your lordship invokes the spirit of Luther, and of the rest of the Reformers, but, having studied their correspondence and their various formularies of faith, I question whether they would not be much surprised at the greater part of the theology advanced by the gentlemen on the platform this morning. At any rate I would suggest that, as Luther and Calvin each devoutly consigned the other to hell, it might be safer not to invoke their assistance!"—(a laugh.) "In reply to the last and most imposing part of your lordship's brilliant address, namely, 'The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible!' I will, with the permission of your lordship and the meeting, read the declaration of the Catholic Bishops, published in 1822." (hear, hear.) "But, before doing so, permit a few comments on this high sounding cry of Protestants. Catholics naturally inquire whether those, who have abridged the Bible, should raise the clamour of the 'whole Bible,' against those who have preserved every part of the written word of God untouched, from the time when the canon of Scripture was fixed by the early Church? Catholics continue to receive as inspired, eight books which the Protestants reject,—therefore this watchword can only

raise a smile. With the same surprise, Catholics listen to the last declaration, of 'nothing but the Bible;' for they find that the patrons and subscribers of the Bible Society, are likewise the zealous promoters of the Tract Society; and that, after endeavouring by every argument and illustration, to prove that the 'Bible alone is a sufficient guide to heaven,' the same men, when addressing the last mentioned society, exert all their reasoning and eloquence, to prove the utility and blessed effects of these separate notes and comments called tracts! Catholics are also aware, that each Protestant sect has a favourite and appropriate Bible, of which the notes suit the opinions of that particular body. The High Church of England has authorized the notes collected from their venerated theologians, by Bishops Mant and D'Oyley, as proper explanations to the unlearned of the true meaning of Scripture; and this Bible, with its copious and learned notes, is also published in cheap editions, to be circulated amongst the poor. The Low Church party have also their Bible, with the 'private interpretation' of the Calvinist Scott; and an old lady of my acquaintance might have expressed the feeling of the whole body when she exclaimed, 'As long as I can read dear Mr Scott's notes, and look at his picture, I feel quite safe!'—(a laugh.) "There is also known to be a certain Matthew Henry's Bible, with his comments for the Independents, or Non-conformists; so that Catholics, when fully acquainted with these fresh inconsistencies and contradictions, may be permitted to smile again at this high sounding cry of 'The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible,' which, like all bombast, means nothing," Sir Eustace then read the "Declaration of the Catholic Bishops," as follows:—

DECLARATION OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS.

PUBLISHED IN 1822.

"On the Holy Scriptures.—In England, the Catholic Church is held out as *an enemy to the reading and circulating of the Holy Scriptures*. Whereas the Catholic Church venerates the Holy Scriptures as the written part of the word of God. She has in all ages been the faithful guardian of this sacred deposit; she has laboured to preserve the integrity of these inspired writings, and the true sense in which they have been universally understood at all times from the apostolic age. The Catholic

Church has never forbidden or discouraged the reading and circulating of authentic copies of the sacred Scriptures in the original languages. She binds her clergy to the daily recital of the canonical office, which comprises a large portion of the sacred volume, and to read and expound to the faithful, in the vernacular tongue, on Sundays, the epistle and gospel of the day, or some other portion of the divine law. As to the translations of the Holy Scriptures into modern languages, the Catholic Church requires that none should be put into the hands of the faithful, but such as are acknowledged, by ecclesiastical authority, to be accurate, and conformable to the sense of the originals. There never was a general law of the Catholic Church prohibiting the reading of authorized translations of the Scriptures: but, considering that many, by their ignorance and evil dispositions, have perverted the meaning of the sacred text to their own destruction, the Catholic Church has thought it prudent to make a regulation, that the faithful should be guided in this matter by the advice of their respective pastors. Whether the Holy Scriptures, which ought never to be taken in hand but with respect, should be made a class-book for children, is a matter of religious and prudential consideration, on which the pastors of the Catholic Church have a right to decide with regard to their own flocks: and we hold that, in this matter, none have a right to dictate to them.

“The Catholics in England, of maturer years, have permission to read authentic and approved translations of the Holy Scriptures with explanatory notes: and are exhorted to read them in the spirit of piety, humility, and obedience.

“Pope Pius the Seventh, in a rescript dated April the 13th, 1823, and addressed to the Vicars Apostolic in England, earnestly exhorts them to confirm the people committed to their spiritual care, in faith and good works: and, for that end, to encourage them to read books of pious instruction, and particularly the Holy Scriptures, in translations approved by ecclesiastical authority; because, to those who are well-disposed, nothing can be more useful, more consoling, or more animating, than the reading of the Holy Scriptures, understood in their true sense,—they serve to confirm the faith, support the hope, and to inflame the charity of the true Christian. But when the reading and circulation of the Scriptures are urged and recommended as the entire rule of faith, as the sole means by which men are to

be brought to the certain and specific knowledge of the doctrines, precepts, and institutions of Christ ; and when the Scriptures so read and circulated are left to the interpretation and private judgment of each individual, then such reading, circulation, and interpretation, are forbidden by the Catholic Church, because she knows that the circulation of the Scriptures, and the interpretation of them by each one's private judgment, was not the means ordained by Christ, for the communication of the true knowledge of His law of all nations. She knows that Christianity was established in many countries before one book of the New Testament was written—that it was not by means of the Scriptures, that the Apostles and their successors converted nations, or any one nation, to the unity of the Christian faith—that the unauthorized reading and circulation of the Scriptures, and the interpretation of them by private judgment, are calculated to lead men to contradictory doctrines on the primary articles of the Christian belief, to inconsistent forms of worship, which cannot all be constituent parts of the uniform and sublime system of Christianity, to errors and fanaticism in religion and to seditions, and the greatest disorders in states and kingdoms."

This declaration was listened to with marked attention, when, after a short pause, Sir Eustace continued.—“ To prove, by one little anecdote, amongst a thousand, the misapprehension under which Protestants labour with respect to the biblical ignorance of Catholics, I will conclude this subject with mentioning a trifling occurrence which fell under my notice about three months since, when enjoying a tour in Switzerland, with some highly esteemed Protestant friends. One of the ladies of our party was much struck by the looks and manner of a little muleteer, who accompanied us, with others of his tribe, in our excursions round Berne, and asked him in French, whether he could read ? ‘ Oh yes ! he could read, and liked reading very much.’ Had he a Bible ? ‘ No ! he had never seen one !’ My fair friend groaned over this proof of popish ignorance, and the next day lent the little fellow a cheap edition from the Tract Society in Paris of ‘ Bible Stories,’ telling him they were all true, being taken from the Sacred Word of God. The following morning, Louis reappeared with his book, and the conclusion in the mind of his fair patroness was, that priestcraft had interfered to prevent his acquaintance with Scripture ‘ What, had he not read the book ?’

“ ‘ Oh yes! it was very pretty, but all the stories in the first part, he had read, and could repeat by heart, from ‘ L’Ancien Testament,’ and all those in the second part, from ‘ Le Nouveau Testament.’ ”

“ ‘ Why, then, he had read the Bible ! ”

“ ‘ Oh, had he? He did not know any name but the two Testaments.’ ”

“ ‘ And how came he to have read all those stories ? ”

“ ‘ Why, his priest had taught them to him every Saturday evening, when he went up with the others to his Catechism ! ”
(Hear ! hear !)

“ My Lord, in taking leave of this meeting, I would express, in the name of my fellow-Catholics, our due sense of the good intentions of those, who would spare neither labour nor expense to provide us with Bibles, when, like the little muleteer, their precious contents have been taught us from our earliest infancy. We also thank you for the well-meaning exhortations you give us, to put our own construction on Scripture, in opposition to the interpretation of our Church : but we must see a far different result to the Protestant rule of faith, before we can be induced to leave our good mother. The advantages, nay, the necessity, of having a living speaking authority, for preserving peace and order in every society, is too obvious to be called in question. The Catholic Church has such an authority, but your different societies of Protestants, though claiming it, cannot effectually exercise it, on account of your opposite fundamental principle of each man’s private judgment. When debates arise amongst Catholics, concerning points of faith, the pastors of the Church, like judges in civil contentions, fail not to examine them by the received rules of faith, and to pronounce an authoritative sentence upon them. The dispute is thus terminated, and peace restored ; for, if any party will not ‘ hear the Church,’ he is of course ‘ considered as a heathen and a publican : ’ but dissensions amongst your Protestant communities must be irremediable and endless, from your fundamental law of religious liberty. Let me assure you, likewise, my Protestant countrymen, that the same method, which Christ has appointed to keep peace in his Church, has also preserved it in the hearts of her children ; and while other Christians, who have no rule of faith, but their own fluctuating opinions, are carried away by every wind of doctrine, and are agitated by dreadful fears, as to the safety of the road they are in, Catholics, being

moored to the rock of Christ's Church, have no apprehensions on this head. Their faith is clear to them—their sole anxiety is how best to fulfil its high demands on their practice.” (Here one of the speakers on the platform observed, that a false security was most awful, crying “Peace—peace, when there was no peace!”) Sir Eustace then continued, with reference to this observation.—“In justification of this confidence in the power granted to his Church to decide on matters of faith, the Catholic would reason thus:—‘There was no time when a visible and speaking authority did not exist, to which submission was due. Before Jesus Christ, that authority was in the Synagogue; when the Synagogue was on the point of failing, Jesus Christ himself appeared; when that Divine Being withdrew, he left a Church, and with it his Holy Spirit. Tell me that Christ once more appears upon earth, teaching, and preaching, and working miracles, and I want that Church no longer. But has he not left, you would say, his written Word? He has done so, a Word holy and adorable, but it is a Word that may be handled, and expounded, as fancy shall direct; a Word that remains *silent* under every interpretation. (Hear! hear!) When difficulties and doubts arise, then I *must* have some external guide.’* The ancient Church, in possessing the affection and confidence of her children, claims equally the homage of their reason; and, in reply to that intended reproach, so frequently advanced to-day, that the ‘Catholic faith is a religion of the senses,’—I say, you are right, my friends, our Catholic faith is a religion adapted to every sense, every faculty, every power possessed by man, and is therefore the only one to fully satisfy the yearnings of his complicated nature; the only one to fill his heart, his mind, his soul, his strength; the only one that can grasp the reach of the Almighty's harmonious scheme of a Universal Church, formed of countless millions of every tribe and every language—divided not by the grave, death having no power over the perfect communion of saints; having one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one Hope, in a glorious Resurrection unto life eternal!”

Here De Grey paused, and bowing to the chairman and to the meeting, retired from the front of the platform; and, whether it were from the novelty and excitement of hearing something on the opposite side of the question, or that the open countenance and manner of the young Catholic had softened their party pre-

judice, the applause at the conclusion of his address was given heartily and kindly, and many whispered encomiums followed, indicative of the discovery, that, although a papist, the young man had not turned out so great a fool as might have been expected. Room was politely made for him on the left hand of the chairman, and he had scarcely seated himself, when the lion of the day was perceived to mount the steps of the platform, and amidst the perfect uproar of excitement and approval, the secretary, after several ineffectual efforts to be heard, at length raised his voice sufficiently to give forth, in resounding tones, the celebrated name of "Mr Shadowshake, that instant arrived from Ireland!" Fresh applause followed his announcement to the meeting of their favourite courier from the land of Hobbogoblin, which applause was hushed into a perfect calm, as the reverend gentleman began to recount the terrific wonders and marvellous acts of popery in the sister isle; when, after nearly an hour's address, during which he had seen, heard, conjectured, supposed, believed, and taken for granted, more Satanic exploits than any one who had not followed Mephistophiles over the Brocken, Mr Shadowshake clasped his hands, and exclaimed,—“Indeed! indeed! my heart weeps tears of blood for Ireland. My unhappy country has become a den of wild beasts;—yes, the Romish priests are wild beasts, they are hyenas!”*

With this the reverend Reformer sank back exhausted, his face covered with the sympathetic dew of fear—and heat; and a glass of water was handed to him, as he reposed at the back of the platform.

The noble chairman now put to the “Ayes” and “Noes” of the assembly, whether, before breaking up the meeting, with the concluding prayer and psalm, an Irish gentleman, who had come over from Ireland in the same packet with Mr Shadowshake, should be permitted to address the meeting on the subject of Ireland's religion, and Ireland's distress, for the space of half an hour? The “Ayes” carried it, and one of the most sunny countenances that Erin could produce, presented itself at the railing of the platform, and in a strong Irish accent Mr O'Niel thus began:—“I am indebted to the courage of the noble lord and his friends on the platform, for the liberty allowed me of advancing to this barrier, from which, having in honour bound myself not to leap down among you, I may venture to acknowledge, even to

* Extracts from a speech made in Exeter Hall.

the timid sex here present, that I am a—wild beast! in fact, a hyena! (loud laughter)—to the excited imagination, at least, of my honest countryman who has just preceded me. Yes! my English fellow Christians,” continued he, in a changed and deeply impressive tone, “I am an Irish Catholic priest! one of that race, whose cruelty, rapacity, and usurped power, have been the theme held up this day, for your execration. And now, what can I reply? Why this—that we Irish Catholic priests, have learned your notions of us, and, as the servants of Him, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again, have also learned forbearance, and compassion for the calumnies you utter. (Hear! hear!) We consider that, with the earliest dawn of life, the infant mind is compelled to imbibe the fables of false men, that, as the infant mind expands, it is only to take in a larger quantity of anti-Christian prejudice, and that, when arrived at maturity, it is still presented with these fables in another form; so that, from the cradle to the pulpit, the Protestant mind is fed with nothing but falsehoods! May we not then be surprised that we are treated with *any* forbearance or indulgence? (Hear!) This I address solely to the innocently ignorant; but I have something to say to the wilfully ignorant also, and it is this:—For three hundred years have the Catholics of these realms declared their faith, and Protestants have refused to hear it! For three hundred years have Catholic books of faith been published, and Protestants have refused to open them! To what, then, have you listened?—to Protestant tradition! What, then, have you read?—Protestant dreams and fictions? and is this the way to understand the faith you condemn? And shall I regret that no better specimen of the Irish priesthood is before you, than one, whose rustic appearance, and habits of seclusion amongst the simple poor of his own land, so little fit him to address this refined and brilliant assembly? Shall I regret that no practised controversialist, no finished orator, presents himself, to answer all the charges brought against us?—No! it matters not! In his simple way has Patrick O’Niel addressed such meetings before: he has, by the force of truth alone, compelled the suffrages of the benches below, and the apologies of the platform around him; his clerical opponents and himself have seemed to part as brethren; and, in a week or two, these very men have formed a meeting at their next station, and repeated the calumnies for which they had just apologised. (Hear! hear!) ‘My dear Sir,’ said I, to one of these Reformation gentlemen, whom I

met soon after this repetition of injury, 'I thought you had begun to know and esteem the Catholic priests, and I am surprised and hurt at your late speech!' 'My dear Sir,' says he, 'no one can esteem the Catholic priests more than I do, as individuals; I only attack the priesthood in general.' 'Ah! my dear Sir,' says I, 'it is a peculiarity attached to the Catholic priesthood, that, as individuals, we are all children of God, and in the lump, all children of the devil.' (a laugh.) Just now, in leaving Cork for Bristol, I meet another agent for this society, whom I find running off with a wrong end of a story, and I very innocently go after putting him right. 'My good sir,' says he, 'not a word against my story, if you please, for I am at the fag end of my tour, and—I want anecdotes!' (much laughter.) Now, my friends, allow me to congratulate you on the budget which the Rev. Mr Shadowshake has opened for your amusement to-day, and, in comparison with which, I fear my stock will prove but scanty. However, as my countryman has said so much respecting the Catholic priesthood, as being inimical to the moral and religious education of the people, perhaps you would like an '*anecdote*' on that subject. (Hear! hear!) Scarcely a speech has been uttered this day, but it has been said of Ireland, that 'darkness covered the land, and gross darkness the people;' and I admit that, during many years, the dearth of learning was most lamentable. (Hear.) Ah, my friends, you are pleased with this concession on my part! wait a little, however, for I shall expect the same candour from you! Our inquiry is, whether this ignorance was owing to the priesthood. From the year 1695, to the year 1782, an act of your Parliament was in force, in Ireland, by which the Catholic Priest and the Catholic Schoolmaster, were transported, if the one were discovered instructing the people in the mysteries of religion, or the other teaching the children the simple elements of education. (Hear! hear!) This act extended to Catholic printers and booksellers, and by no means remained a dead letter, as four hundred and twenty-four priests were shipped off, and large rewards offered to any one who should find the unlawful practice of education going forward. My dear old father is still alive, he is fast approaching his ninety-ninth year, and to this day he boasts of having got his learning as he got his whiskey—both illegally. (a laugh.) Yes! in bogs under hedges, and in deep vallies, the priest and schoolmaster carried on their illicit process of education, while some of the boys stood on the

neighbouring hill, to give the alarm, if the *Discoverers*, as they were called, should appear in view, to catch, and send the Catholic tutors abroad. (Hear! hear!) Now, my friends, take this fact. It is not yet fifty years since these Protestant laws were repealed, so that every Irish Catholic beyond the age of fifty, who can read or write, reads and writes illegally. He got his learning in violation of the laws at home, or he smuggled it from the continent. And now what think you? Why, a truce to pleasantry, when those men, who regret that these cruel, tyrannical laws were ever repealed, are the persons to come forward, and taunt us with our ignorance. (Hear! hear!) Yes! they, and such as they, have walled up, and would again wall up, the fountain of knowledge, and then reproach us with not having drunk deep of it? They seal up the volume of science, and if we stretch forth a hand to open it, they strike, and while striking, wantonly reproach us for being ignorant of its contents. (Hear! hear! hear!) But, never shall it be forgotten—to the glory of Ireland is it recorded—that, in the cause of literature and science, as in the more holy cause of religion, she has suffered persecution! (Loud cheers.) And can her sons forget that there *was* a time, when the youth of other countries flocked to her renowned seminaries and colleges, when by the divines of other countries, she was styled, the ‘Isle of Saints,’ when, in her freedom, in her glory, in her domestic peace, Ireland was Catholic—wholly, purely, Catholic? And now, when you would change the faith that made her glory, and her peace, have not her groans, her tears, her passionate appeals—have not her anguish, her crimes, her deep, deep curses, told you what your new religion would make old Ireland? (Hear! hear! hear!) Yes! Protestant dissent has laid low the flower of nations! She lies bleeding, and you would fain poison the only balm that can heal her wounds—that balm which is found in the love, the trust, the veneration, which her noble children feel for their priests—those pastors who have entered in at the door of the sheepfold, by apostolical and sacramental ordination, not climbing over, as ‘thieves and hirelings, whose own the sheep are not.’ These shepherds are ready to lay down their lives for their flock, and the flock feel this. They have, in undertaking the solemn work of the ministry, left all for their spiritual children. Like their divine example, they can say, ‘Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?’ And can you hope that the adopted children should not feel this? Can you hope to se-

ver ties, which are knit to the rock of ages? No? my dissenting friends, give over your hopeless cause;—‘It is hard to kick against the pricks!’ Turn, with the great convert St Paul, to serve the Church you have hitherto persecuted, thinking to do God service! Or if this seem to you yet impossible, at any rate pause from the violation of Christian charity; for, oh! has it never struck you, that the position in which you have placed yourselves is a most awful one—that of bearing false witness, that of inducing strife and contention, which are the works of the devil? My Bible-quoting friends, who pique yourselves on remembering every word of sacred writ, can you not *act* on that beautiful assurance, ‘Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God?’ But, indeed, I would hope, that many who are here, love to be peace-makers, and shrink from bearing false witness against their neighbour. I would hope, that many who are here, have never heard or read a word of Catholic verity in their lives. If such, then, there be here at present, I invite them to listen to the following solemn declarations, from the mouth of a Catholic priest; but remember, that in hearing them, your plea of ignorance is over, and that, from this date, any misrepresentation of the faith of Catholics, is a deliberate breach of God’s commandment, and a compact with the father of lies!

“*Cursed is he, who commits idolatry, who prays to images or relics, or worships them for God.” At the end of this, and each following anathema, Sir Eustace de Grey, in a loud and stern voice, answered, “Amen.”

“*Cursed is every goddess worshipper, who believes the Virgin Mary to be more than a creature, who adores her, or puts his trust in her equally to God; who believes her above her son, or that she can in anything command him:” “Amen.”

“*Cursed is he, who believes the saints in heaven to be his redeemers: who prays to them as such, or who gives God’s honour to them or to any creature whatsoever:” “Amen.”

“*Cursed is he who worships any bread in God, or makes God of the empty elements of bread and wine:” “Amen.”

“*Cursed is he who believes that priests can forgive sins, whether the sinner repent or not: or that there is any power *cu* earth or heaven that can forgive sins without a hearty repentance, and serious purpose of amendment:” “Amen.”

“*Cursed is he who believes that, independent of the merits

* From Gothe’s Works.

and passion of Christ, he can obtain salvation by his own good works, or make condign satisfaction for the guilt of his sins, or the eternal pains due to them : ” “ Amen.”

“ Cursed is he who contemns the word of God, or who hides it from the people, in order to keep them from the knowledge of their duty, and to preserve them in ignorance and error : ” “ Amen.”

“ Cursed is he who leaves the commandments of God, to observe the constitutions of men : ” “ Amen.”

“ Cursed is he who omits any of the ten commandments, or keeps the people from the knowledge of any one of them, to the end that they may not discover the truth : ” “ Amen.”

“ Cursed is he who preaches to the people in an unknown tongue, such as they understand not, or uses any other means to keep them in ignorance : ” “ Amen.”

“ Cursed is he who believes that the Pope can give to any one, upon any occasion whatever, dispensations to lie, or swear falsely ; or that it is lawful for any one, at the last hour, to protest himself innocent, if he be guilty : ” “ Amen.”

“ Cursed is he who encourages sin, or teaches men to defer the amendment of their lives, on presumption of a death-bed repentance : ” “ Amen.”

“ Cursed is he who places religion in nothing but pompous shows and ceremonies, and who teaches not the people to serve God in spirit and in truth : ” “ Amen.”

“ Cursed is he who loves or promotes cruelty : who teaches people to be bloody-minded, and to lay aside the meekness of Jesus Christ : ” “ Amen.”

“ Cursed is he who teaches it to be lawful to do any wicked thing, though it be for the interest and good of Mother Church, or that any evil action may be done, that good may ensue : ” “ Amen.”

“ Cursed are we, if, in answering ‘ Amen ’ to any of these curses, we use any equivocations or mental reservations, or do not assent to them in the common and obvious sense of the words : ” “ Amen.”

“ What ! my friends, I hear you ask, ‘ Is it possible that papists can seriously, and without check of conscience, say ‘ Amen ’ to all these curses ? ’ Yes, they can, and are ready to do so, whensoever, and as often as shall be required of them. When Protestants, therefore, find that Catholics utterly reject

the doctrines imputed to them, and this, too, in the most solemn manner, ought they not to bring forward some documents equally solemn? (Hear!) And can they do so?—No! they cannot. (Hear! hear!) On you, my hitherto ignorant friends, I trust these solemn declarations, in the name of the Catholic priesthood and laity, which my honoured brother in the faith, and myself, have given you, will find some resting place in your hearts and consciences, and that, on leaving this meeting, you will own that Catholics are not such as you had supposed them to be: while we, on our part, being aware that the night of prejudice cannot pass away in an hour, will await, I trust, in patience and humility, the dawn of a new day, when it shall be said, as in early times, ‘Behold how these Christians love one another.’ (Hear! hear!) Yes, my Protestant brethren, if you will now extend the right hand of fellowship towards us, it shall be accepted, not as the sign of a truce merely, but in token of an everlasting peace, worthy of that festival which is at hand, and on which we may together sing the glorious anthem of the angels—‘Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace and goodwill to men.’”
Mr O’Niel here left the meeting, amidst loud and continued cheers.

CHAPTER VII.

If thy heart were right, then every creature would be to thee a looking-glass of life, and a book of holy devotion.

Thomas à Kempis.

THE clock of the Town-Hall struck four, as the last verse was intoned of the old hundredth psalm; and all were now eager to depart, although, as it was perfectly dark, excepting the scattered lights on the platform, the ladies of the Sedgemoor party had been charged not to move, till their escort should have joined them. Colonel Torrington was the first to free his impatient wife, and Lady Anne, from the bench on which they had stiffened and yawned; and Sir John Scotney overtaking them at the door, the quartett drove off as they came. Colonel Torrington, who had been rendered anxious and distressed by the address of the Catholic Priest, was but little disposed to converse; still he had to pacify his disappointed wife, for not having given his intended speech; while Sir John had to endure the extravagant

* Several parts of this speech are taken from those at the Reformation Meeting at T rbay, 1833.

admiration of De Grey's appearance and grace of manner, on which Lady Anne continued to expatiate with an irritation and peevishness to which poor Sir John had no clue, save in the consciousness of his own exterior deficiencies.

"I used to meet Sir Eustace de Grey for ever in Yorkshire, the winter before last," sighed her ladyship, "and he used to admire me so much!"

"I cannot be surprised at that," replied the good-humoured husband, "for I admired you, Anne, not only the winter before last, but during many winters."

"But I had not an idea, at that time, that Sir Eustace could make such a speech. I am sure he always talked great nonsense to me at the balls. I wonder whether he and Miss Carrington are really engaged? As for her believing in the Roman Catholic religion, I do not credit a word of it, for really she is a very clever girl, though so dreadfully conceited, it is quite fatiguing: and I do not think she is at all the style of woman to attract Sir Eustace de Grey: but then her fortune is very convenient for him."

"Oh, there is nothing in that attachment," cried Mrs Torrington: "I have reasons for knowing that Sir Eustace never thought of Miss Carrington, though she certainly did think of him, and therefore tried to admire all the absurdities of his creed: but Lord Hervey's attentions have given a marked turn to her theology."

"Yes, indeed," returned Lady Anne; "I have seen enough to be aware that this far-famed heiress would have no objection to be a countess!"

"I do not know the woman who would object," observed Colonel Torrington.

"Well," continued his lady, "at any rate, Miss Carrington seems to have decided in favour of the Protestant coronet, else why should she have conveyed Lord Hervey, in this public manner, to hear the Protestant cause defended, and have detained him so long, talking to her, that I thought he would never join you on the platform. You cannot think how the people round me were noticing and commenting upon this conduct."

"Do you know," said Lady Anne, "that I cannot help thinking, that Miss Carrington knew of the return of Sir Eustace de Grey, and that is the reason why she at last consented to come. Did you not remark how agitated she was, when Lord

— announced that Sir Eustace would address the meeting— or perhaps she pretended to be so. I think this Geraldine Carrington is a perfect coquette, and her religious doubts, the greatest farce in the world. I suppose that Sir Eustace will now have his eyes opened,—not, as I said before, that he ever liked that style of woman !”

So saying, the pretty bride leaned back inviting repose, and her example was soon followed by her companions, who each slept or mused in a corner of the carriage, till they reached the Priory.

In the mean time, Geraldine and Miss Graham remained in their places, till Mr Everard, attended, not by Lord Hervey, but by Major Tankerville, succeeded in finding them, and our heroine eagerly secured the arm of her old friend, not only for the positive pleasure of his kind protection, but also for the negative one of avoiding the conceited and tedious Major, who, she feared, might expect an invitation to the seat, which Lord Hervey had occupied in the carriage. And where then was the latter, that his usually prompt attendance had devolved upon another ? Was it, that he had remained to converse with either of the Catholic speakers ? Had he been convinced by any of the beautiful truths they had uttered ? She dared scarcely admit such a hope, yet, she longed to find what effect had been produced on his mind. The little party could proceed but slowly down the stairs, and through the portico, with the rest of the crowd, and, as Major Tankerville followed with Katherine, uttering in audible tones every thing the most distasteful, Geraldine began to consider, whether civility really demanded of her so total a sacrifice of her comfort, as that of having him opposite to her during the sixteen miles of her drive back to Sedgemoor. She then reflected on the Catholic belief in voluntary sufferings as acceptable before God, and at length feeling, that, with this belief, she could endure any thing, even the Major, she was just turning to offer him the vacant seat in her barouche, when, on the last of the steps leading down to the portico, she saw Lord Hervey waiting to hand her into the carriage, and found, from the few words which passed between the friends, that Major Tankerville was engaged to meet Mr Shadowshake at a dinner given in the town. With lightened step Geraldine followed Katherine into the carriage, Lord Hervey and Mr Everard took the opposite seats as before, and the door was already shut,

when, for the first time, seeing Lord Hervey's countenance by the flaring gas lights, she exclaimed, with all the warmth of manner arising from her conviction of his mental suffering,—“Oh you are ill, Lord Hervey! you are indeed! You have been over-fatigued. Stop!” cried she to the footman, “stop the carriage!”

Lord Hervey did indeed look ill, and confessed that, before the close of the psalm, he had been obliged to leave the platform, and to repose in a less heated atmosphere than the one he had quitted. The people, who had collected round him, had pressed him to drink some restorative, and he was sufficiently strengthened, he said, to proceed—he would not detain his kind friends—the drive could not but refresh him, both in body and mind, and at length the carriage drove off; not, however, before Geraldine had caught a glimpse of Sir Eustace de Grey, who, leaning against one of the pillars of the portico, with his cloak wrapped closely round him, had fixed his eyes intently upon the occupants of the carriage, and now, on meeting Geraldine's glance of recognition, bowed profoundly, and, as she thought, coldly; but before she could determine whether it really had been so, her attention was again attracted by the pale, sad countenance of Lord Hervey, as closing his eyes, he permitted his harassed mind, and aching head, to repose in silence, which no one interrupted, and which was soon succeeded by a calm of thought and feeling, to which Geraldine's kindness of look and tone had chiefly contributed.

Their route did not exactly lie in the direction of the Manor Hall, but, on leaving the town, Geraldine distinctly traced the Abbey ruin, and almost uttered an exclamation of pleasure, as from one of the renovated arched windows, a faint light assured her that it was inhabited. As she continued to watch that part of the ruin, which for nearly a mile remained visible, she pictured to herself the Catholic priest, Father Bernard, engaged in solitary prayer or study,—or perhaps hearing the confession of some penitent—or conversing with some chosen friend—perhaps with De Grey! If so, how interesting would be the subjects discussed! she envied each by turns. Miss Graham had also seen the light from the ruin, and, willing to recall her friend from the train of thought to which she guessed that sight had given rise, made some whispered remark to Geraldine, calculated to remind her of the companions beside her.

"Do not lower your voice on my account, Miss Graham," said Lord Hervey, in a voice scarcely audible from weakness.

"I had hoped, my lord, that you were asleep," said Katherine.

"Asleep!" replied he; "Oh no—how *could* I sleep!"

These words struck on Geraldine's already softened heart; yet how could she yield to its dictates? She did not believe that Lord Hervey's illness had been caused by awakening doubts respecting the justice of his cause, but from anxiety, rendered almost desperate, on her account, when after having induced her to be a listener to all that he fondly trusted would re-convert her, his hopes had been overthrown by the unexpected defence given by the two Catholics. Geraldine was right in her conjecture respecting the cause of Lord Hervey's illness. He had, from the moment when De Grey advanced to the front of the platform, fixed his eyes on her, who was the chief, if not the only, object of his solicitude. He had marked the start of joyful surprise with which she heard Lord ——'s announcement—the emotion which succeeded, and the enthusiastic attention which she afterwards gave to the whole of De Grey's brilliant and effective address. Pang after pang had shot through Lord Hervey's heart, as he saw in De Grey a twofold rival, with whose talents his humility trembled to compete: and although assurances had been given him that no attachment, or even preference, had subsisted between De Grey and Miss Carrington, still it was impossible for Lord Hervey to believe that a state of indifference could long continue—and fearing, that greatly as the Catholic and himself differed on many other points, they must agree to love and admire the same woman, his Lordship, at the close of De Grey's speech, seemed resolved to remain on the platform, for no other purpose than to watch the speaking countenance of Geraldine. Throughout the calamitous and harrowing details of popish atrocity, brought forward by the reverend Mr Shadowshake, that countenance had given him no encouragement, it looked by turns weary and contemptuous, till, on the opening of Mr O'Niel's address, the flash of triumph in her eye, and the merry laugh which he saw, though he heard it not, told him that the time was passed when Catholic and Protestant could address her on equal ground. These convictions, as they were slowly admitted by Lord Hervey, would not have so greatly discouraged him, had he known that the pain

which Geraldine was inflicting was shared by herself, and that, in the silence which followed his mournful reply to Miss Graham, Geraldine had probed her heart sufficiently to find that it was there her danger lay. The excitement of the preceding hours had left her also fatigued and depressed, and her thoughts tinged with gloom. So much of mental conflict had been, and must still be, hers—she was so keenly alive to the misrepresentation which her conduct and motives would meet from a hasty and censorious world, she shrank with such terror from the publicity which must soon be given to her opinions, that she clung more and more to the fond idea of being loved, and more truly appreciated the value of that disinterested attachment, which yet she must renounce: but must she indeed renounce it? Should Lord Hervey's religious convictions remain steadfast, was there nothing to be expected from his liberality? Would he, would his parents, ever consent to his marriage with a Catholic? If so, what would be her line of duty? She could not resolve:—but the flattering suggestion was not discarded, that the purity of her motives, in becoming a Catholic, would be far more evidenced were she to marry a Protestant, and the rumour hushed for ever, that, in the mighty change which her religious feelings had undergone, any part was to be attributed to De Grey.

The evening at Sedgemoor Priory was passed in comments *sotto voce* between those who had attended the meeting. Mr Everard sate apart with Lady Winefride, rallying her on her supposed ignorance of her nephew's movements, and giving her an outline of both his and Mr O'Neil's speech: while Miss Graham, as she partly listened to this, could not help occasionally overhearing also the whispered conversation of the group surrounding Lady Hungerford, and was amused to find how entirely the speakers on each side, were, by their own party, supposed to have won an easy victory. At some distance from the rest of the party, Colonel Torrington had challenged Geraldine to a game of chess, and Lord Hervey, who, though unable to attend the dinner table, had joined the party in the evening, rested on a sofa near them, ostensibly watching the game, which was conducted with such apparent deliberation and caution, that it remained yet undecided on the breaking up of the whist party, notwithstanding the discovery by Mr Everard, that both kings were in check! Had Geraldine been aware how much Colonel Torrington had been initiated, during his drive home, into her

supposed vacillation and coquetry, she would have been still more grateful for his giving her so excellent an excuse for silence. As it was, however, she guessed that he intended only kindness, and she guessed rightly. Colonel Torrington did not see the necessity of believing all or any part of what had fallen from the lips of his wife and Lady Anne. Still there had been some assertions made, with such apparent simplicity of knowledge, that he could not but believe them partly true; and when he drew Geraldine aside to their quiet chess table, it was from the benevolent feeling, that, although she had received the Catholic faith for the sake of one admirer, and now was about to relinquish it for another, yet he should leave all severity to the ladies, it being more their vocation, and content himself with hoping, that all theological whims would be dispatched previous to her union with his friend, Lord Hervey.

CHAPTER VIII.

As the desiring nothing abroad, brings peace at home, so the relinquishing ourselves interiorly, joins us to God.

Thomas-à-Kempis.

THAT light, which Geraldine had silently observed in the abbey ruin, did in truth proceed from the dwelling of the priest, towards which Sir Eustace bent his steps, immediately on leaving the Town Hall. Having been, with Mr Everard, chief architect in rendering the ruin habitable, he was at no loss to find the private entrance, and was ushered in with glee, by Joanna, the house-keeper, to the room in which Mr Bernard awaited him.

"Welcome, Sir Eustace," cried the latter, "you are the first to enter these old walls since my establishment here, and you ought to be the first!"

"Give me the fitting blessing," replied De Grey, bending his head, while he held his pastor's hand between both his own

"Almighty God bless you, as I do," replied the priest.

The fire blazed cheerfully, and served more than the candles to light up the little apartment, round which De Grey turned with interest. "I have not been here," said he, "since the finishing of all this oak-work, and I hope you found niches enough, and shelves enough?"

"Three niches were all I wished, and I found them," replied Mr Bernard: "one for our blessed Lady, and the other two for St John the Evangelist and for St Bernard, my two patrons."

They stand well in the divisions of the book shelves ; do they not ?”

“ They do : but where is the well-remembered crucifix ?”

“ There is one,” replied Mr Bernard, pointing to a small recess, which, with its slab, its one chair, and its cushion, betokened, with the presence of the crucifix, its appropriation as a confessional : “ there is a beautiful one !”

“ Ah ! but not *the* one,” said De Grey. “ Where have you placed that exquisite work of Benvenuto Cellini ?”

“ It is not here,” replied Mr Bernard.

“ Why not ?” persisted De Grey.

Mr Bernard only smiled. At that instant, the door was flung open, and Joanna, entering with quick step, soon placed the dinner in readiness on the table. She then reminded the good priest and his guest, that all was ready, and grace being said, the friends proceeded to do justice to Joanna’s skill in meagre fare.

“ The good Protestants of Elverton little expected to see any Catholics at their meeting, or they would not have been so unmerciful as to fix it on a Friday,” said the priest smiling.

“ Oh, I am scarcely at all fatigued,” returned De Grey. “ There was no clamour, no strife : on the contrary, the most marked attention was given by the audience, and the occasional interruptions from the platform were made in the strictest adherence to good breeding.”

“ A blessed change, indeed, in the spirit and temper of the town,” observed Mr Bernard ; “ and whom did you see at this meeting ?”

“ I saw the future Lady Hervey !” said De Grey, crossing his arms, and leaning back in his chair.

“ I do not know her,” quietly observed the priest.

“ Yes, Sir, you do know her, by her present name, and from the many proofs given you by Mr Everard of her fine mind, and her unconquerable desire to know the truth. ‘ Unconquerable,’ however, I dare no longer call it, since a coronet has proved the stumbling-block !”

“ Was Miss Carrington the only person present ?” said the priest, smiling.

“ No ! there were crowds besides : but what could induce her to be there ?”

“ And why should she not ?” continued Mr Bernard. “ You represent this meeting to have been perfectly decorous in every

respect, and perhaps Miss Carrington might wish to hear the public speakers on both sides."

"All that would have been perfectly excusable, and even praiseworthy," said De Grey, "could it but have been the case: but I learned on the platform, that not a Catholic was expected. My request in behalf of Mr O'Niel and myself, took them quite by surprise, a surprise that was quite equalled by my own, on perceiving Miss Carrington, who, it seems, conveyed a party thither. Lord Hervey, by the bye, arrived in her equipage, and returning in the same way; and she must, therefore, have deliberately consented to listen, during hours, to falsehood and invective, against what she knows to be the truth, for the sake of—Lord Hervey."

"Well! well!" said the charitable Mr Bernard, "we must suppose that her convictions are not so strong as you have imagined, or that she has obtained Lord Hervey's consent to follow them, even though she become his wife; but now for the speeches."

"Ah! Mr Bernard, you do not know Geraldine Carrington."

"I suppose not," returned he, smiling: but let us forget that lady for a while, and now speak to me of the meeting in general. What did you touch upon in your own speech?"

"Being but a layman," said De Grey, "my chief task was to correct the historical and chronological mistakes from the chair, mistakes which were listened to with the most complacent attention, notwithstanding the counter-evidence of Gibbon, Hume, and the rest of the Protestant, or rather infidel, historians. I also endeavoured to calm the outrageous pity expressed for us papists, as they nickname us, because we do not think it necessary that our children should study the Levitical ceremonial, and other parts of the Old Testament, which, in the outcry for the 'whole Bible,' it would seem were considered by them as essential to the formation of a young woman's Christian education. But enough of my own speech: you should have heard Mr O'Niel, for I cannot attempt to report another man's eloquence."

"Endeavour to recall part of it," requested Mr Bernard, aware that, when once fully entered into the subject, De Grey could pour forth a flood of eloquence, rarely to be surpassed, and this soon became the case, in giving the young Irishman's address, though it was in abridgment. "And these are the men," cried he, in conclusion, "who are denounced as blood-thirsty tyrants—as having neither the love of God, nor of man. What

nas England done, that she should thus be given up to believe a lie?"

The friends sate by the fire for some time in silence, till, at length, Mr Bernard inquired what was Sir Eustace's opinion of the increase of Catholicity in England?

"Within the last year," replied De Grey, "there has been scarcely a circle in which some instance has not occurred, to be deplored or ridiculed, of conversion to the ancient faith; and, in most of these cases, the first steps have been made in consequence either of the overstated reports of Protestants against us, (for he who proves too much, proves nothing) or, from the negative proof given of our stability and peace, by the endless vacillations of those who are not Catholics."

After discoursing for some time on these subjects, there was again a pause, and one the more strange, considering that, after an absence of several months, Eustace de Grey could again command the undivided attention of his venerated friend. Mr Bernard made one or two observations, which were assented to in so absent a manner, that at length he became aware of this, and sate patiently waiting till the spell should be broken. At length De Grey roused himself, and inquired whether the particulars of Mr Richmond's will had been made known to Mr Bernard!

The latter replied, "No!" that he had merely heard of the old gentleman's decease, and that Sir Eustace and his cousin, the Countess Angela de Grey, were his joint heirs.

"Then you have yet to hear the peculiarity of this will," said De Grey, "which is this: the bulk of the fortune is left to Angela for her life, should she continue single, and at her death is to come to me and my heirs. Should she marry, she forfeits half to me: but if I am to be the chosen man, she resigns the whole to me!"

"Pardon me," said Mr Bernard, "but I do not quite comprehend."

De Grey repeated the conditions of the will, and then Mr Bernard inquired whether Mr Richmond had not arranged this extraordinary will under the influence of some feeling which required explanation?

"He gives us this explanation in a rational manner enough in the will itself," replied De Grey; "and I believe him to have been in the most complete possession of his faculties. He sets

forth the consideration he has always had for me, as his male heir, and the superior affection he has always borne Angela, as the child of his favourite niece ; and adds, that, while he has felt anxious to continue to Angela every comfort she has enjoyed beneath his roof, he would not indulge this acknowledged partiality to the exclusion of my claims on his fortune. Mr Richmond had always maintained, that a wife should possess nothing independently of her husband ; and perhaps the old gentleman, in his dread lest Angela should become the wife of another, instead of fulfilling the dearest wish of his heart, which was a union with me, has thought to bring in the generosity of her character as auxiliary to his scheme. Yet this complicated arrangement fails in its intention. Angela may wish to fill my impoverished coffers with old uncle Richmond's savings, but it is not in her dignified and delicate nature to call farther on my gratitude ; while I am equally embarrassed how to act towards her. Were I convinced of her sometimes suspected preference for me, the mere circumstance of lying under obligation to the woman who loved me, ought not to gall my pride perhaps : but I confess that I feel somewhat of a grudge to good old uncle Richmond, that he has not divided the property simply and unconditionally between us, or, better still, that he should have empowered me to be the bestower and minister of all her comforts."

"Those struggles of the natural heart, against receiving the benefits of our fellow-creatures, must be subdued," replied Mr Bernard. "Doubtless, in most cases, it is more blessed to give, than to receive ; but the blessing here intended, is one laid up in store for those who give in simplicity, in self-denial, expecting no present return ; not for those who proudly scorn an humble position, and only breathe freely on an eminence, amidst the incense of praise and gaze of dependants."

"Still it is the birth-right of man to be the benefactor, and not the obliged," said De Grey.

"If I thought so," replied Mr Bernard, smiling, and holding out his hand to the friend who had indeed denied himself in many comforts, to give him a suitable home,—“if I thought so, I should not be here !”

De Grey seized the hand extended to him, and exclaimed, “I am still of my own opinion, my dear Sir, for, in this respect, I am by far the happiest of the two.”

"But should you be happy," continued Mr Bernard, "if, in return for all you have done for me, I were to shrink from you in all that morbid delicacy and self-love, which is miscalled 'proper pride?' If I were to upbraid my Maker for not having given me a dignified competency, placing me out of the reach of humiliating benefits? Remember, that, with the whole range of his own created beings spread before him, *He* chose to be the reputed son of an humble artisan,—that, while his followers left all to follow him, He bestowed no earthly favours on them. We hear of his accepting the hospitalities of Lazarus and Martha, but we hear of no addition to their household comforts, from the gratitude of him who could command the riches of heaven and earth. He submitted that woman should minister unto him, whose reward was not found here below, and in every thing, even to being the guest and the dependent, He 'humbled himself,' Believe me, Sir Eustace, that it is far more easy to acknowledge Jesus Christ to be Lord and God, than to follow him in his *preference* for humiliations and privations."

"Most true," replied De Grey, with a sigh, "and to the humble in heart is given farther grace, enabling them to receive all those hard sayings, which lead on to perfection. I sometimes wonder that you have never entered into a religious order, and added the merit of obedience and poverty to your other crucifixions of the flesh!"

"I am more adapted by my all-wise Maker for the pastoral charge," replied the priest, "and therefore it is my duty to remain in the post assigned me, striving, though in the world, not to be of it, and to possess my little property as though I possessed it not, denying myself in all things not essential to life, and parting from every thing, however innocent, or even sacred, which might ensnare me into making idols."

"Mr Bernard," said De Grey impetuously, "you shall never disengage yourself from your attachment to me, or any other of your penitents. Keep your heart wide open, Sir, and let the full tide of brotherly love gush forth. In truth, there is not too much of that feeling abroad, and, in the state of politics and religion in this country, where every second man you meet is ready to knock you down, for the sake of his party, or his creed,—for God's sake, let Catholics, at all events, love each other; and let him, especially, who bears the name of John Bernard, cultivate and show forth the virtues of the beloved disciple!"

"Do not misunderstand me," replied Mr Bernard. "I aim at nothing beyond what that highly favoured disciple offers to me, in his meek, and pure, and lovely example. You well remember his injunctions so often repeated, and so strongly enforced, that the flock should love one another; still more should the shepherds of that flock feel and observe this. But tell me, what inspired him with that tender charity? Was it not that he had laid on that sacred bosom, and drank at the source of divine and fraternal love? Could St John ever forget, amidst his Jewish or Gentile converts, however interesting or engaging they might be, that he had spoken with the Lord of Glory?—that, heart to heart, he had been united to his God? Could he love them, but in Him and for Him? Never! never!"

Mr Bernard devoutly crossed himself, De Grey did the same. During the solemn pause which followed, the distant sounds of the Town Hall clock were heard to strike eight; and the little echoing chimes of Joanna's clock told the same hour of night prayers in the abbey. The friends arose, and, by a door into the sacristy, joined the old housekeeper and the little boy who served as acolyte, and all passed into the chapel. During the usual Catholic service, at that tranquil hour, De Grey's over-excited feelings became subdued; the intense yearnings he had previously felt after earthly happiness; the uncertainty of his position, and of his own feelings respecting the Countess Angela; the bright vision, which, in Geraldine Carrington, as a convert to the Church, had floated before his imagination; all ceased to agitate him, as, kneeling before the sanctuary, the things of time were viewed in their real light, and the eye of faith perceived that there was nothing 'fair,' or 'bright,' or 'true,' but heaven!

CHAPTER IX.

He who's convinced against his will,
Is of the same opinion still.

Hudibras.

DURING a walk, on the following morning, to watch the village skaters on the sheet of water on Sedgemoor Common, the party from the Priory fell into several unprecedented tête-à-têtes. Amongst these were, Lady Hungerford with Mr Everard, Lord Hervey with Miss Graham, the young German Baron with Lady Winefride, and Geraldine with . . . Major Tankerville!—

the Scotney and Torrington couples keeping together, and indulging in their usual comments and conjectures, respecting the matrimonial and theological intentions of the rest. That these several conferences were the result of some preconcerted plan, appeared evident to each of those who were thus sought, and to none more than Mr Everard, who, though frequently consulted by Lady Hungerford, had never before been invited so decidedly to walk with her out of listening distance; and his acuteness instantly detected in the formal manner of her opening attack upon him, that she had learned it by heart, either from her son, or from Major Tankerville. This persuasion induced him to remain perfectly silent, that her ladyship might not be flurried out of any part of the charges she had against him, which, in fact, made up a pretty long list; but to which, after a decent pause, to be assured that he had heard the last, the old gentleman only replied by his usual, "Well!"

"Well! Mr Everard," said her ladyship, much encouraged by the correctness with which she had remembered all his delinquencies, and the patience with which he had heard them,— "Well, Sir! I can only repeat my surprise, that you, who have hitherto proved such a friend both to General Carrington's family and to our's, should now have been so instrumental in bringing such an affliction upon both houses, as the loss of this dear girl."

"My good lady," replied Mr Everard, "you might just as reasonably upbraid an oculist because he has removed a film from the eyes of one, who, for *family reasons*, had better have been kept blind! Not that I can take any credit to myself for having cleared Miss Carrington's vision. Had I been unwilling, she would have found some other to do her bidding."

"Nay," replied Lady Hungerford, "if you had resolved that Miss Carrington should believe all this Roman Catholic faith, it would have been far better that you should have remained her only instructor, than to have engaged this handsome and talented young Catholic as your aid-de-camp."

"Lady Hungerford," returned Mr Everard, "remember, that it was at your own house, two years ago, that Geraldine Carrington first met Eustace de Grey. Some renewal of the acquaintance was, I believe, made during the following season in London, and once only since then, and that by chance, at the abbey ruin near Elverton."

"Ah! Mr Everard," sighed her ladyship, "indeed you have not considered the danger of working upon the romantic and poetical turn of our dear young friend, by these scenes and associations of mind!"

"And so, my lady," said the old gentleman, stopping abruptly, and dropping his arms, "you suppose Miss Carrington fool enough, to believe in seven sacraments, and Transubstantiation, because I have put some painted glass into an arched window?"

Lady Hungerford not having received any directions what to say in reply to any defence from Mr Everard, his sallies in general defying calculation, now looked a little at the skaters, and then at Geraldine and Major Tankerville, who were deeply engaged, as it appeared, in combating each other's opinions. She felt some hopes revive from the see-saw motion of the Major's arm, which she thought betokened argument or eloquence, and again leaned on Mr Everard, to join the rest of the party. Miss Graham and Lord Hervey having apparently finished their appointed task, were now standing on the ice close to the group of skaters, till the fears and remonstrances of Lady Hungerford engaged them to return to safer footing. A graceful figure-dance then began between four of the village youths, from which Major Tankerville turning, as from an ungodly sight, Geraldine found herself at length standing in peace, to enjoy one of the few rural amusements left to England, no longer 'merry England,' sectarian gloom having spread over its village greens, and round its blazing hearths, stopping the dance, the song, the festive games, of olden times. It was on the opposite side of the water that Geraldine and Major Tankerville had parted, and after some time watching the evolutions of the skaters, her attention was drawn to the position in which she stood with respect to the rest of the party; a relative position, which was in perfect keeping with her approaching declaration of the faith she inwardly cherished. Between herself, and her still kind, though anxious friends, lay deep waters, only to be passed by means of a brittle surface, which seemed to her no inapt representation of the forbearance and charity of the controversial world towards a convert to the ancient Church. She now looked earnestly at the group, from which she had thus accidentally been separated, and her heart sank, as she rapidly threw a prospective glance on her intercourse, as a convert to Catholicity, with these her protesting friends. So deeply were

her thoughts engaged on this difficult subject, that she perceived not that the rustic feats were over, nor observed the various signs made to her by her own party, not to cross the ice, which they feared she might attempt, but to join them at the head of the water; and it was not until the returning footsteps of Major Tankerville on the frosty ground caught her ear, that she remembered his existence, and with it the probability that his dull ignorance was to be a second time inflicted upon her. To escape was now her sole aim, and, hastily taking the path which led to the rest of the party, she was soon within greeting distance of Miss Graham, who was advancing to meet her, accompanied by Lord Hervey. The latter, whose spirits seemed revived, gave an arm to each lady, and the whole party turned towards the Priory.

"Did you ever converse with Major Tankerville before?" inquired Lord Hervey of Geraldine, anxious to discover what effect the exhortations of his friend had produced on her mind.

"Never," she replied; "nor can I say that Major Tankerville has 'conversed' to-day. I do not think that term could apply to his communications with any one."

"Why not, Miss Carrington? Give me your definition of Tankerville's speech, or talk, or what I am to call it?"

"I have heard," continued Geraldine, "of some orators in Parliament, who can make a grand opening speech, but who can never reply. This is the case with Major Tankerville. He cannot reply, and therefore he cannot converse. He starts well enough, and you are forced to listen with respect, because he repeats so much of the sacred Word of God: but when, in your turn, you object that such and such texts cannot be applied where he would apply them, because of such and such reasons, he cannot combat those reasons. I often wondered, during our walk, that he could not bring forward something in answer to my objections. I almost longed to help him. His only resource was to repeat these misapplied texts in a louder tone, which, as I told him, left the point in debate exactly where it was before; and I believe, that never was man in greater rage with woman, than Major Tankerville with me."

"Oh! he is only zealous," pleaded Lord Hervey; "you must pardon him. And may I ask what were the particular points on which he dwelt?"

"Why, that is exactly what I wished your good friend to con-

fine him self to," replied Geraldine ; " and I find it more difficult to remember what each one said, than I have found it to recollect whole evenings of discourse with my uncle, Dr Sinclair. But I will do my best, and endeavour to render our conversation as methodical and consecutive as it was in reality the reverse. To begin then :—The Major's first charge against the Catholics was, that they preferred the human authority of the Fathers to the divine authority of the Bible. Then followed a torrent of invective. As soon as I was permitted to reply, I said, that I was quite accustomed to hear that charge, and that nothing could be more false. That I supposed it to originate from discovering how little the ancient theological writers agreed with the modern Protestants, that the latter, being forced to resign them, accused the Catholics of being guided by them, rather than by the Bible ; but that the question was really this : the Bible stands unrivalled and alone ; but which body of men are to be trusted for its explanation, the ancient, or the modern, Christians ? those who had listened to the Apostles and their immediate successors, or those who in these days taught in direct opposition to them ? I did not attempt to argue with Major Tankerville, as I should have done, had he found it convenient to remember the authority given by Christ to His Church, to decide in matters of faith : for I believe he shuts his eyes, or calls it a misprint, whenever he comes to any strong text of that nature. I made battle with him entirely on his own ground, and it was that which at last made him so angry. In reply to his assertion, that the Bible was to be our sole guide, for that the spirit accompanied the sincere reader, I told him that my private study of the Bible had determined me to be a Catholic ! He spoke against human authority, and I agreed with him, and objected to any one's presuming to interfere between God and my soul, and inquired, how it was that he could venture to speak to me, when I had a Bible ? In fact, I claimed every privilege, equally with himself, of choosing or rejecting exactly what appeared to my own judgment wise and good. I said that, if I found more wisdom in the early councils than in the modern religious societies, I had every right to my preference ; that, if the Fathers of the early Church were but men, what then were their successors ? What were the Fathers of the English Church and those of the Kirk of Scotland—the framers of the Thirty-nine Articles, or of the Assembly's Cat-

echism? Major Tankerville did not attempt to defend these authorities: he considered them to be only 'partially enlightened;'—therefore I proceeded to his own particular set of highly illuminated Christians—the chairman and committees of the Bible Society, Tract Society, Reformation Society, &c., and inquired upon what grounds I was to yield my private judgment to them? Were they more than uninspired men? Most assuredly and avowedly not. Then, why were these men to interpret, and dictate, and dogmatize to *me*, a Bible reader, when they own, nay even boast, that the Holy Ghost has *not* overruled their decisions? Here Major Tankerville caught a view of the village skaiters, and not having an answer to give, he fled from them, and from me: and now, Lord Hervey, that I have attended the Reformation Meeting, to please your mother, and have taken a walk with Major Tankerville, to please yourself, I trust that no more is expected of me!"

"Oh do not say this," replied Lord Hervey, earnestly. "You have a prepossession against poor Tankerville, and therefore nothing comes acceptable from him; but if you could be induced to have a conference with some other pious Christian friend, some faithful gospel minister—for instance, Mr Shadowshake."

"Mr Shadowshake!" cried Geraldine, laughing. "Now confess that good purblind Mr Shadowshake's testimony amounted to this—that, in the Roman Catholic Church, there have been, and still are, ambitious prelates, artful Jesuits, and immoral confessors;—what advantage could accrue from my listening to endless anecdotes, true or false, on these topics? I do not leave the Church of England because of her former race of hunting, drinking, swearing parsons! neither do I conceive it would have been the duty of a pious and enlightened Israelite, during the latter years of Eli, to have renounced the faith of his forefathers, because a Hophni and Phineas, by their disgusting rapacity and licentiousness, drew a glaring scandal on the temple of their God, to so great a degree that it was said, 'Men abhorred the offering of the Lord!' This mistaken conduct of renouncing the dogmas of a Church, on account of the mal-practices of its members, is exactly that for which I blame Luther and the rest of the Reformers. Had God intended that moral rectitude should be *invariably* bound up in the priestly office, to what purpose is the following text, from the divine lips of Christ himself,—'The scribes

and pharisees sit in Moses' seat. All, *therefore*, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do : but *do not you after their works, for they say and do not.*'"

"I do not remember that text," said Lord Hervey.

"I can quite believe that you do not," replied Geraldine ; "for I have been perfectly astonished at the way in which, as a Protestant, and piquing myself on my knowledge and impartiality, I have dwelt on some texts, to the total exclusion of others, and this must be, in fact, the secret of all sectarianism. With respect to the stumblingblock, so often cast in the way of the weak believer, by the infirmities of those placed over him in high and sacred office, we might reflect, that, amongst the twelve chosen Apostles, those who were the most favoured and distinguished, were those who the most transgressed. One doubted, another denied, a third betrayed his Lord, and two more gave way to a spirit of resentment and revenge, while all strove who should be greatest !"

"I never considered the subject in this light before," said Lord Hervey.

"Take care, my Lord," whispered Katherine, "that Miss Carrington does not convert you, while you are endeavouring to do the same kind office by her !"

This was said in a playful tone, but it was a warning truly meant—Miss Graham's discrimination having led her to perceive, that Geraldine was more than a match for her noble admirer in power of mind, grasp of thought, and stock of information. That Geraldine appeared not to have fully discovered her advantages, was to be accounted for solely by that dimness of vision which a growing affection ever produces ; and Miss Graham trembled lest Lord Hervey's conversion to the faith of his lady love, should be the result of these repeated conversations. Why this kind hearted and devoted friend should have dreaded a turn in Geraldine's affairs, which would have smoothed all difficulties, would also appear most strange ; but all was to be accounted for by that terror and aversion to the Roman Catholic Church, which seemed inaccessible to argument or feeling. She now rejoiced that the walk was ended, and that Lord Hervey, instead of entering the house with them, turned back to join his friend, Major Tankerville, and pace with him up and down one of the sheltered walks in the shrubbery.

"Come ! my dear Kate," cried Geraldine, playfully, when

the friends were again alone in the privacy of their rooms, "it is now your turn to report the subject of your *tête-à-tête* this morning. Pray, what did you say to our zealous friend, and what did he say to you?"

"I indulged in much fewer impertinences than, by your own account, you appear to have indulged in to poor Major Tankerville. I fear that you will make that man your enemy!"

"And I fear you will make Lord Hervey too much your friend," returned Geraldine. "I am rather jealous of your private consultations together."

"I am glad to hear this," said Katherine, smiling; "but the feeling is wasted—all our talk was of you."

"And what of me? The old story of popish bewitchments?"

"Yes! Lord Hervey is very anxious that you should have an interview with some pious and talented Evangelical minister, who could bring you back to the pure faith you are deserting. Some one who has experience in controversy, and could expose the fallacy of those opinions you now adopt."

"And did you tell him," said Geraldine, "that I have listened to High Church, Low Church, No Church! till I can hear nothing that is not only threadbare, but torn to rags?"

"Lord Hervey is no more satisfied than myself," replied Katherine, "with the views of those who have hitherto been your instructors, and then your opposers in controversy. You might as well have listened to the Pope himself against popery, as have taken that inflated High Church Warden for the guardian of your protestantism!"

"Still you allow, Katherine, that my uncle is a perfect specimen of the old-fashioned High Church of England, and that in him, and from him, I have seen and heard enough to satisfy me respecting that party amongst Protestants?"

"Yes, I allow so far," said Miss Graham. "At the outset of your battle with him, you called yourself 'the little David, with but sling and stone.' I thought of this afterwards, when, by merely pushing his own principles to their extent, you vanquished him, and, to carry on the metaphor, Goliath fell under the weight of his heavy armour, and was beheaded by his own sword."

"So much for High Church defeat, or suicide," cried Geraldine; "and will you not allow that I have had specimen sufficient in the Low Church marches, and counter-marches, and

mutinies, to see that the Church militant must have a general, with subordinate officers, to 'fight the good fight' with any success? Just conceive, in a great pitched battle with formidable adversaries, that each soldier abided by his own private tactics, pursuing them, even through the bodies of his equally perverse companions in arms! what but carnage and disgrace could be the issue of this private judgment? And yet this is exactly the view to be now taken of the Low Church party, against the invisible but desperate enemies, led on by the 'Prince of this world!'

"Do not suppose," replied Miss Graham, "that because I cannot always oppose you in metaphor, I am necessarily won over to the point to which I see you would lead me. I cannot cope with you at all times, not being so versed as yourself in this particular line of controversy, which, I cannot but think, you have taken up from the want of other mental aliment. You are fond of grappling with difficulties, Geraldine; and this excitement of mind is become necessary to you; but I foresee that, when once in the Roman Catholic Church, and by degrees accustomed to, and satiated by, all the wonders and mysteries of that mighty pile of accumulated belief, you will then sigh after more than even that abundant storehouse can bestow!"

"You are right, Katherine! I shall still, I trust, sigh after that full, perfect, all-satisfying Church, to be found only in heaven. Yet, in that militant part of the Universal Church, of which I am in heart a member, struggling and imperfect though it be, I enter the bright vista leading to the eternal portals, I mount the first step of the Patriarch's ladder. That perfect communion between the glorified and militant Church throws a halo round the latter, full of inspiration. It beckons onward!"

"Almost all the party here, Geraldine, are persuaded that you are led into the Romish Church entirely by your imagination."

"Let one of them conquer me in stiff and sober argument, before they repeat this absurd charge," cried Geraldine; "or let them, in penance for it, wade through all the tomes I have done, making notes, comparing one author with another, and searching for truth, with infinitely more trouble and labour, than if I had merely jumped after it to the bottom of a well."

"Again a metaphor," said Katherine, smiling.

"Well then," continued Geraldine, "do you not see, Kate,

that if I possess this imagination, this love of excitement, this perception of the vast, the beautiful, the harmonious, no other religion than the Roman Catholic can possibly satisfy me. In fact, my friends here are so far right, that my imagination, together with every power of my mind, and every faculty of my soul, leads me there. But these friends, and almost every one in this cold calculating age, speak of imagination, as though it were a crime, never reflecting that, if God be not the author of evil, He cannot bestow evil gifts upon His children. It is man who perverts and misuses every heavenly gift; and how? By expending it upon the things of earth. But am I doing this? It is in vain for my friends to indulge the hope, that this, to them, alarming faculty of mine can be crushed and annihilated. I can no more still the aspirations of the imagination, than I can those of the mind and soul, of which I deem it the offspring. Possessing, then, a gift which cannot be destroyed, and which, if not used, will be abused—how is it to be employed?"

"Certainly, in the service of God," replied Katherine; "but even then not with extravagance; for St Paul says, 'Let your moderation be known unto all men.'"

"Or," rejoined Geraldine, "as the Catholic version has it, 'Let your modesty be known unto all men,' which version I prefer. But do not expect me any longer to argue by opposition of texts on any subject. Three hundred years have proved its inefficacy in settling disputes amongst Protestants, and I consider it as a desecration of the sacred word of God. The sense of the Bible is gathered from the grand whole, not from detached parts; and the entire weight of Scripture goes to prove that we are to offer up our whole being to our God."

"I know, and trust I observe, that truth," replied Katherine; "but remember, that God, who gave you an exalted imagination, gave you also judgment and common sense, of which fully as strict an account will be demanded, as of the other more brilliant quality."

"Granted! my dear friend; and this is the account I can give of my judgment and common sense, which two qualities are exclusively canonized and worshipped in this our nineteenth century. When I began to reflect that my title of 'Protestant' was a negative one, and referred to something positive, and precursive, I immediately made myself acquainted with that against which I had been all my life protesting: now, that

showed some judgment! And when, on the investigation of this original Church, finding nothing to protest against, I protested no longer—surely this was common sense in its most palpable form!”

Katherine smiled, and sighed. “Then I may tell Lord Hervey that you have irrevocably made up your mind.”

“You may,” replied Geraldine; but the animation of her countenance passed away, as she said this, and she also sighed.

CHAPTER X.

Sweet is the smile of home, the mutual look,
When hearts are of each other sure;
Sweet all the joys that crowd the household nook,
The haunt of all affections pure.
Yet in the world e'en these abide, and we
Above the world our calling boast.
Till then who rest presume—
Who turn to look are lost.

Keble.

On entering the drawing-room before dinner, Lord Hervey again sought Miss Graham, and inquired in a low voice the success of her conference with Miss Carrington.

“I can report no success whatever,” she replied; “and I rather think it will be the better policy to abandon the subject of controversy for the present. Geraldine is armed at all points, and, so far from disliking an opportunity of making us all wiser, as she thinks, she readily brings all the powers of her mind, and all the graces of her playful fancy, to make the ‘worse appear the better reason.’”

“Then you think the case hopeless, Miss Graham,” said Lord Hervey, in so desponding an air, and leaning so confidentially over Katherine’s chair, that several of the party observed him with surprise, and watched Miss Graham’s countenance, to discover whether a melodrama of rival friends was about to be enacted.

“I think the case hopeless, as far as argument is concerned,” said Katherine; “and I do not think it would be right to work upon her feelings. I have never attempted it, and the trial, if successful, could not be lasting. Miss Carrington would never consent to lose her own esteem.”

“Then what is your resource, Miss Graham—what can be said, what can be done, to rescue one so dear to us—to you, I mean, especially?”

"I should advise," replied Katherine, "that Miss Carrington's Protestant friends now preserve total silence, that opposition may no longer feed the energy and resistance of her character. Let her, on the contrary, see all the wood and wire of the fabric which she now so much admires. I would fain believe 'tis distance lends enchantment to the view,' and that a near approach will break the spell."

"A near approach!" repeated Lord Hervey doubtfully, for the image of De Grey crossed his mental vision; "do you think that would be wise in Miss Carrington's present state of mind?"

"Why, my Lord," continued Miss Graham, "we have seen the little effect of any warnings or reasonings, while the priestly power, and all its train of tyrannical absurdities, continue but a speculation, a theory. But let our high-minded and independent friend begin to feel one link of the popish chain, and she will rebel."

"I like your plan better than Tankerville's; and yet there is much hazard in it," said Lord Hervey.

"What does Major Tankerville advise?"

"He advises much sterner methods, than any of Miss Carrington's friends would be inclined to adopt; and I grieve to say, that a mutual misunderstanding of each other's characters has only been increased by my ill-timed request, that they should engage in argument. He thinks this lovely and endearing creature is completely a spoiled child, and intoxicated by the homage rendered to her talents, and that bewitching—I know not what to call it—daringness or originality of mind, which surely is the best test, after all, that the heart is all candour and simplicity. What think you, Miss Graham?"

"I think," replied Katherine, "that my dear Geraldine's character is like the limpid stream, which flows over the rich ore, its very clearness and graceful ripple being in itself so attractive, that you scarcely remember the golden stores beneath."

"Beautiful!" cried Lord Hervey: "how refreshing it is to hear one woman sincerely praise another!"—and so approvingly did his Lordship now look on Katherine, that Geraldine, who, while she talked with Lady Hungerford, was watching the two apart, caught that peculiar expression which had hitherto been directed to herself alone, and a momentary pang shot through her heart. All now moved, at the summons to dinner, and as

Lord Hervey was roused to lead in, as usual, the Lady Anne Scotney, while Miss Graham took the arm of Major Tankerville, another look of intelligence passed, which was equally observed by Geraldine : but this time she felt no pang at the possibility of Lord Hervey's attaching himself to the woman, who, of all others, was, perhaps, the best suited to him. There even came a sensation of relief, that the responsibility of making Lord Hervey miserable was not to be added to her other trials. That Katherine had not a thought of self in conversing with his lordship, Geraldine was as perfectly persuaded, as if she had heard every word that had passed, and, with her usual ardour, she now longed to impart her ideas, and wishes, to her faithful and unconscious friend, who, from the other side of the table, turned her clear confiding eyes on her the more fondly, because her neighbour, Major Tankerville, was imparting to her in a growl, which he intended for a whisper, that no greater sign of reprobation could be given, than Miss Carrington's rejection of gospel truth, as imparted by his lips that morning.

During the rest of the evening, Geraldine's thoughts were wholly turned to the communication she desired to have with her friend, and, after the party broke up, her impatience suffered a long trial from the seemingly unusual duration of her maid's attendance, as well as the continued discussion which went on in the adjoining room, between Miss Graham and Phoebe, respecting the speakers at the late meeting in Elverton. At length the firewomen withdrew, and Miss Graham, throwing open the door of communication, came to bid her friend "Good night."

"Oh, Kate, do not say 'good night' yet awhile, but rest in this easy chair, and let me talk to you for half an hour."

"No, indeed, Geraldine, we have both talked enough, and more than enough, for one day. You looked pale at dinner, and Lord Hungerford, who was the first to remark it, said he was sure you kept late hours. I must plead likewise for myself, for I am very sleepy."

"But, Katherine, I have something really of consequence to say to you ; nothing of controversy, but yet something which concerns us both. There ! sit down, and I will tell you all about it."

Miss Graham accordingly leaned back in the cushioned chair, while Geraldine stood a little apart, preparing to open her mind ; when, after some little hesitation and delay, she perceived, on

approaching her friend, that her comfortable position had invited her into so peaceful a nap, that, struck with the contrast to her own wakeful and energetic thoughts, Geraldine gave way to her keen sense of the ludicrous, in a merry peal of laughter, which awoke Katherine, and excited sufficient astonishment to fix her attention.

"I beg your pardon, dear Kate," cried Geraldine, "I did feel very serious, quite in keeping with the subject I had to propose; but now, perhaps, after all, it would be as well for us both to go to bed."

"No," said Miss Graham, smiling, "now that you have begun in so wise a manner to disburthen your mind, I am ready to hear the sprightly remainder."

"Well then, my beloved Katherine!" cried Geraldine, throwing herself on her knees and taking both the hands of her friend,—"I have discovered to-day, that had Lord Hervey not been already prepossessed in my favour, had he met us both together for the first time, you, Katherine, *you* would have been his choice."

"'Tis true I went to sleep, but then I awoke again," said Miss Graham. "Now you, Geraldine, are still dreaming! No wonder that such absurdities should make you laugh."

"But I did not laugh at the fact I have mentioned, though it makes me so happy. It was your composed nap that so much amused me," replied Geraldine.

"I was by far more sensibly employed than yourself," said Katherine, "by resting myself, while you were vainly endeavouring to place this unmanageable subject in a fair light to me. Did I not tell you this morning that you loved to grapple with difficulties? now here is a delightful impossibility for you!"

"Not at all impossible, or even difficult," persisted Geraldine. "Lord Hervey will soon weary of the hopeless task of reconverting me. I am but a passing fancy. There can be nothing deep in his regard for me, the principal bond of union being wanting, which is religious sympathy. I know well that Lady Hungerford declares her son to have loved me from a child, but, considering that he has married in the interval of his devotion, I do not feel myself obliged to be more grateful than the case requires."

"You know, very well," replied Miss Graham, "that Lord Hervey was deterred from avowing his sentiments towards you, four years ago, from witnessing the preference you showed for

Don Carlos Duago. Lord Hervey then left the neighbourhood, and very shortly afterwards—too shortly not to betray his disappointment—he married Miss Emily Tankerville. How could he, then, do otherwise than forget you? Would it not also have been an insult to her gentle and pious memory, to have admitted a thought but of her, during the first year of widowhood? Yes! Lord Hervey has acted throughout with all the feeling and propriety to be expected from him,—his only fault being that want of self-confidence, which prevented his remaining to compete with, and overcome, his foreign rival."

"Perhaps," said Geraldine, "I might have become the wife of Lord Hervey four years ago, had not my fancy been gained by another, from whom obedience obliged me to part: but I can now see that it was so ordained, that I might at this time be left unshackled, to follow the dictates of my conscience. Therefore, do not fear, on my account, to love Lord Hervey, if you should find it possible. His destinies are not linked with mine; and while you probably look on this assertion as a flight of the imagination, I feel it to be a truth."

"Dearest Geraldine," said Katherine, rising, "I cannot in conscience suffer you to break through your hours of rest in this manner. Your days are now full of conflict and danger; let your nights at least be calm:" and breaking from her friend, she entered her own room, leaving Geraldine still on her knees, and now absorbed in devotion.

The following day was Sunday, and an early breakfast was attended by those who deemed it their duty to go to the morning service at the parish church. Major Tankerville, having ascertained that the rector of Sedgemoor held very erroneous views, mentioned his intention of going to the Baptists' meeting-house, where a very godly man led the congregation, and Lord Hervey seemed rather inclined to follow his example. However, on starting for a walk across the park, according to a previous engagement with Colonel Torrington, Geraldine and Katherine found that Lord Hervey and his father were waiting to join them. Lord Hungerford gave his arm to Geraldine, while his son walked by her on the other side, and Miss Graham followed with Colonel Torrington.

"Where the deuce is Everard?" cried Lord Hungerford.

"Gone with Lady Winefride to the popish mass at Burnleigh," replied Lord Hervey. "What account does that old

man think of giving, at the last awful day, of this tampering with danger, this public sanction, of what in his heart he disbelieves, and ought to abhor?"

"Better leave Everard and his conscience to his God," replied the Earl; "how do you know that he disbelieves what you abhor?"

"Because he confesses that he would give half his learning, and half his wealth, to believe what the Catholics believe, but that he cannot. He, therefore, does not think their faith, in all its parts, necessary to salvation, and it must be this restless desire of conformity to their Church, without the capability of believing all she teaches, which leads him to form those extravagant schemes, which have made him the laughing-stock of all parties."

"Everard's is but the usual fate of religious peace-makers," replied Lord Hungerford:—"not that I mean to defend all his schemes,—for instance, he not only would have all Christian communities to frequent indiscriminately each other's places of worship, but would have them intermarry, for the sole purpose of compelling toleration and forbearance. Now this presents many difficulties;".....and the old lord fell into a pondering fit, in which he was joined by his companions, not without some embarrassment of feeling; Lord Hervey was the first to break through this silence, by introducing some pious subject of less personal application, which lasted till they reached the village church of Sedgemoor.

The prayers were devoutly read, and the sermon, to avoid which Major Tankerville had gone to the meeting-house, contained nothing certainly to amuse the intellect, no discoveries of hidden meaning in simple texts, no high doctrine, but an earnest practical exhortation to the flock on 'forgiveness of injuries,' grounded on the pure motive of conformity to Christ our example, and as done unto him, and for him. From the rector's mode of appeal to his hearers, Geraldine concluded that dissensions in the parish had given rise to his choice of subject, and felt that it must sink deep into the hearts of those personally interested.

On their return home, by the same rural foot-path, the sermon, as usual, was the subject of discussion. Lord Hervey lamented that the preacher had imbibed "Baxter's low views;" Lord Hungerford anathematized that "confounded spirit of criticism," which had taken possession of most church-goers;

Miss Graham thought the sermon obvious and dull ; and Colonel Torrington confessed that he had dreamed of forgiving the rector for something or other, and only woke at the general stir. Lady Hungerford and Mrs Torrington drove to church in the afternoon, and this little diversity in the monotony of the day, together with some letter-writing, helped on the tedious hours till dinner, before which time Lady Winefride Blount and Mr Everard returned, and the conversation became animated on the question of using horses, and employing the coachmen on Sundays,—a question which has been so often discussed, that we will not record the many wise things said by the party at Sedgemoor Priory, respecting the Jewish and the Christian Sabbath ; mercy to animals ; the superiority of man's soul to the brute creation, &c. : merely noticing a fresh plan from Mr Everard, that horses should rest on Saturday, the seventh day, it being that originally given for their repose.

In the evening, Lord Hervey, who could not follow Miss Graham's advice, to cease from controversy with her friend, asked Geraldine what were the texts to which she alluded, when she said that " Protestants, with the whole Bible before them, dwelt on some texts, to the total exclusion of others ?"

" I have so long a list against you," said Geraldine, smiling, " that, if I once begin, there will be no time for the sacred music I have promised you."

" Then will you come to my mother's room, after breakfast to-morrow morning ? We shall find only herself, unless you will permit me to bring Tankerville."

" Surely," said Geraldine, with some embarrassment, " it belongs to Lady Hungerford alone to decide whom to admit to her private sitting-room : but, if I might hope for a calm and friendly discussion, it should be rather with yourself and Miss Graham, than with Major Tankerville."

" Then be it so," said his lordship, rising from his seat by Geraldine. " And now may I bring the harp near the fire, that you may not suffer, while you give us delight ?"

Geraldine, " however, preferred going to the instrument, and sang to it during the next hour, neither voice nor memory failing her. Those of the party who could keep awake, felt and expressed themselves much indebted to the relief which the music gave to the monotony of the Sunday evening ; and the dozers, who formed the majority, started up occasionally to utter

their encomiums. At length, on Geraldine's putting aside the harp, to escape quietly to her room, Lord Hervey, after expressing the feelings which her exquisite voice, and devotional expression, had awakened in him, informed her, in a whisper, that his mother, and one or two of their guests, had consented to accompany himself and Major Tankerville to another room, where they intended to read and expound a chapter before prayer.

"I am quite ready to be one of the party," said Geraldine; "but why all this secrecy?"

"My father desired," replied Lord Hervey, "that, if we insisted on turning preachers, it should be without attracting his notice. In fact he disapproves of any one's explaining the Word of God but the clergy, and would have refused our request, but from his wish to have his guests happy in their own way."

In the mean time, Major Tankerville, with that want of tact for which he was so distinguished, had roused the sleeping earl to an immediate sense of what he had conditionally granted, and, not satisfied with toleration, was endeavouring, in the phraseology which Lord Hungerford loathed, to persuade him to attend the exposition about to be given. Lord Hervey looked alarmed, and, after several ineffectual attempts to gain his friend's attention, called to him by his name. Major Tankerville now saw his mistake, and merely lingered to say,—“I am sure that I feel persuaded that of myself I can do no one good thing!” to which Lord Hungerford replied drily, “Never thought you could, Major!” and again seemed to doze.

Those of the party, who intended to form a portion of the household congregation, now dropped off quietly, and Geraldine, taking Lady Hungerford's offered arm, accompanied her to the places assigned them in the room, where the servants immediately assembled: and, to Geraldine's great satisfaction, Lord Hervey, and not Major Tankerville, approached the table on which lay the Bible, and opened the sacred volume at the chapter selected. Before, however, he took the chair placed for him, Lord Hervey approached his mother and Geraldine, and, telling the former that he had forgotten to express his wish, that all present should join in a hymn previous to the reading, requested our heroine to lead the voices, after he should have given out the first verse of the hymn selected, which was the following:—

" Jesus ! thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress,
'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

" When from the dust of death I rise,
To take my mansion in the skies,
E'en then shall this be all my plea,
Jesus hath lived.....hath died for me.

" Bold shall I stand in that great day,
For who ought to my charge shall lay ?
Fully through Thee absolv'd I am
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

" And when the dead shall hear thy voice,
Thy banish'd children shall rejoice,
Their beauty this, their glorious dress,
Jesus ! the Lord, our righteousness !"

Geraldine, having chosen a tune well known to most of those present, was joined at first timidly, then more boldly, by many around her, especially by one fine manly voice, which she afterwards found was Colonel Torrington's, and, during the last two verses, an impressive chorus was given from the domestics at the farther end of the room. After the hymn was concluded, all were again seated, and Lord Hervey read, with deep devotion, the seventeenth chapter of St John's Gospel, returning to the fifteenth and seventeenth verses, which he had more immediately appropriated for his text. " I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth." Lord Hervey's commentary on these verses was simple and touching. The household and visiting domestics listened with the profoundest attention. Lady Hungerford wept, from a variety of emotions, and Geraldine found herself deeply moved. There was something in the genuine and unaffected piety of this young nobleman, which could not fail to inspire a respectful tenderness of feeling. The exposition being over, all knelt in prayer, and here the petitioner's expressions rose to eloquence, the eloquence of the earnest and devout. Geraldine felt that she was (perhaps unconsciously) the occasion and object of many of the heartfelt supplications which arose from Lord Hervey's lips, and she could scarcely restrain her emotion. It was a relief when, the prayer being over, she could escape, without returning to the drawing-room, and rushing to her own apartment, she gave unrestrained vent to the sorrows of her heart.

"Oh? why," thought she, "why do I think differently from him? Why, if he be justified in the sight of God, has this knowledge been given me of truth, which he thinks error? Would that we had never met! Wretched, wretched Geraldine!" Another burst of grief followed. She recalled the time when a similarly painful question had arisen, whether, as a Protestant English girl, she should be justified in marrying a foreign Catholic, and she remembered that the result of her deliberations had been, that, provided Christians were earnest in their love and fidelity to their Divine Master, and full of forbearance and charity towards each other, it was outstepping scriptural prohibition to prevent the union of Catholic and Protestant. "Whence comes it, then," thought she, "that scruples now arise in my mind, as a Catholic, which never molested me as a Protestant? Is it that four years' experience of disunion amongst Christians has taught me the blessedness of being of 'one heart and one mind,' or is it that Lord Hervey's cast of disposition leads me to dread that ill-judged friends would usurp power over him, to mar my freedom and happiness?—I cannot analyze my feelings, I cannot think to any purpose, my only refuge is prayer,"—and Geraldine, now sinking on her knees, fervently prayed that she might be led aright, and that the weakness and vacillation of her heart might be overruled, to advance the cause of truth at whatever trial to her own feelings.

CHAPTER XI.

Those ancient doctrines charged on her for new,
Show when, and how, and from what hands they grew.

Dryden.

LORD HERVEY entered his mother's sitting room, on the following morning, before the hour agreed upon with Geraldine, and found Lady Hungerford on her chaise longue, her attention divided between the Court Journal and her Persian cat, which, with the "clearest views" respecting his own comfort, was claiming far more than his share of the pillow. Lady Hungerford welcomed her son with her usual tenderness, and her satisfaction increased when she found that Geraldine was to spend that part of the morning with her; till, on Lord Hervey's

mentioning the subject of their projected conversation, she sighed, and, shutting the Bible, which he had brought with him, and had spread open on the table beside her, "I grieve to think, Hervey," said she, "that I, who used to have such a respect for the Bible, and always made a point to read a little in it every night, am now frightened at the very sight or mention of the book, for, instead of giving me any comfort, I always happen to fall upon some text that has caused disputes, or that some one says has been wrongly translated. If I had the courage to keep my own opinions like your father, I know that I should be happier, but I have not his firmness, and, indeed, I do not know that I ever had any opinions."

"But, dearest mother," said Lord Hervey, "you were happy last night. The tears you then shed were those of devotion. You were satisfied with the light I endeavoured to throw on the part of scripture selected."

"I was partly happy, and partly sad," replied Lady Hungerford. "I was happy in thinking of your piety and goodness. I thanked God that, in these days of carelessness, if not of open infidelity, you should be what you are!" and the fond mother kissed the open brow of her son, and blessed him.

"Now, why that deep sigh?" said Lord Hervey, after a little pause, and kissing his mother's hand as she leaned over him.

"I sigh to think of your father's prognostics respecting the Church; and I sigh still more, dear boy, to think that it is your party that has driven Geraldine Carrington into Popery!"

Lord Hervey started, and said eagerly, "Does she accuse us of this?"

"Hush, here she is," whispered Lady Hungerford, as Geraldine entered, "and thank goodness, without her eternal Miss Graham."

"I find that Katherine has engaged herself to teach, or learn some new work with Miss Scotney," said Geraldine, approaching the table, on which she deposited her Bible, and a little note book containing the texts in question.

"So much the better, dear girl," said Lady Hungerford. "for it is seldom that I can have this calm enjoyment of you, and Hervey, alone with me;—and even now you are going to spoil it all by these never-ending controversies."

"It was Lord Hervey's proposal not mine," said Geraldine.

"For my own part, I have had enough of controversy, and desire to be free from its excitements and its cares."

"Then, my love," cried Lady Hungerford, "you shall have nothing said to you in my room that you do not like to hear, and Hervey would be the last person to desire it. He only wishes to converse with you here quietly, without all the usual 'entourage.' . . . Now, don't mind me; I am always silent of a morning; but talk away just as if I were not here, only remember there are so many interesting topics for you and Hervey besides religion."

Lord Hervey smiled, Geraldine blushed, and each opened their Bible, the former to show his mother that if he intended to speak on subjects of more personal import to Miss Carrington, it would certainly not be in her ladyship's presence, and our heroine to prove to Lady Hungerford, that she had accepted the invitation to her room for no purpose beyond that of examining the texts in question.

"May I look at this note-book?" said Lord Hervey, securing the little manuscript which lay near him.

"I scarcely know whether to consent," replied Geraldine; "for I wrote those questions and doubts nearly a year ago, before I conversed with my uncle and Mr Everard, and when I had no spiritual adviser near me, whom I could trust. I was alone with my Bible.

"Then this manuscript must have tenfold more interest with me," said he. "Would that you had been always alone with your Bible!"

"You will scarcely think thus, when you have seen the result of my private study and meditation," replied Geraldine.

"Then, would that I had been always with you!" added he, with emotion. Geraldine then pointing to the page in her manuscript, where the reference to scripture begins, requested him either to read, or to let her read aloud, while the other should refer when requisite to the Bible.—Lord Hervey first read as follows:—

"The following Texts are proof that the Church Triumphant is full of sympathy and good offices to the Church Militant.

"FIRST—THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT PASSES UPON EARTH.

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses."—Heb. xii. 1.

“Which things the angels desire to look into.”—1 *Pet.* i. 12.

“We are made a spectacle unto the world, and unto angels, and unto men.”—1 *Cor.* iv. 9.

“God manifest in the flesh . . . seen of Angels.”—1 *Tim.* iii 16

“Then shall I know, even as also I am known.”—1 *Cor.* xiii. 12.

“There were great voices in Heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord. How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell upon the earth.”—*Rev.* vi. 10.

“SECONDLY—THEIR ACTIVE AGENCY.

“The God of Shadrach, &c., who hath sent his angel, and hath delivered his servants.”—*Dan.* iii. 23.

“My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths.”—*Dan.* vi. 22.

“Bless the Lord, ye His hosts,—ye ministers of His, that do His pleasure.”—*Ps.* ciii. 21.

“The angel of His presence saved them.”—*Is.* lxiii. 9.

“For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water.”—*John* v. 4.

“Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.”—*Heb.* i. 14.

“Their (little children’s) angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven.”—*Matt.* xviii. 10.

“And there appeared an angel unto Him from Heaven, strengthening Him.”—*Luke* xxii. 43.

“And angels came and ministered unto Him.”—*Matt.* iv. 11.

“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for some have entertained angels unawares.”—*Heb.* xiii. 2.

“Immediately the angel of the Lord smote him.”—*Acts* xii. 13.

“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches.”—*Rev.* xxii. 16.

“He sent, and signified by His angel, unto His servant John.”—*Rev.* i. 1.

“THIRDLY—THEIR COMMUNION IN PRAYER WITH THE CHURCH ON EARTH.

“But ye are come unto Mount Zion, &c. and to an innu-

merable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.'—*Heb.* xii. 22, 23.

“ ‘That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.’—*1 Cor.* xii. 25.

“ ‘There shall be joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth.’—*Luke* xv. 7.

“ ‘Charity never faileth.’—*1 Cor.* xiii. 8.

“ ‘Pray one for another.’—*Eph.* vi. 18.

“ ‘And the four creatures, and the four and twenty elders, fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints.’—*Rev.* v. 8.

“ ‘And another angel came, and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer with the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.’

“ ‘And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended up out of the angel's hand.’—*Rev.* viii. 3, 4.

“ I find, from the above texts, that the Church is a general assembly ‘under God, the judge of all,’ comprising, first, an innumerable company of angels; secondly, the ‘spirits of just men made perfect;’ thirdly, the members not yet received into glory. I find that, in this Church of the first-born, there is to be no schism, but that the ‘members should have the same care one for another,’ that they are to ‘pray one for another,’ that in heaven ‘charity never faileth,’ (and can there be a more lovely exercise of charity than intercessory prayer?) I find in the heavenly vision given to St John, that the angels at the altar offered up the prayers of the saints. Now, if these were the glorified saints, their prayers must have been for their militant brethren, because, for themselves, prayer had turned to praise:—if the word ‘saints’ may apply to those on earth, their prayers, in being offered by the angel, prove the communion through all parts of Christ's one Church; and from this communion of love let me not be excluded!

“ This beautiful truth has been abused; but no truth should on that account be abandoned; for what is there true or beautiful which has not been abused? There are greater and lesser truths

revealed to man. Among the former is the great truth, that Christ died for sinners among the latter, that His disciples laboured for the conversion of sinners. Does my belief in the latter contradict or obscure my lively faith in the former? Just so, many subordinate articles of belief in the Church neither contradict nor obscure the great foundation of her faith; for truth cannot injure truth!

“If the perfect communion of saints be proved from Scripture, and found to have been the belief in those early ages, acknowledged pure by the English Church (but, in reality, taken on trust, without her knowing much about them); when we honour those whom God honours, and believe that ‘great praise hath he in his saints,’—are we to *exclude* from this perfect and spiritual body, the humble holy Mary, virgin mother of our Lord? If the angel of God addresses her thus, ‘Hail thou that art full of grace, the Lord is with thee!’ and the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of Elizabeth, ‘Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb;’—can it derogate from our love and service to our divine Redeemer to add, ‘Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death Amen!’—This is the whole of the address to the Virgin, called the ‘Hail Mary’ (Ave Maria); that part, ‘Mother of God,’ being added, when certain heretics advanced opinions against the perfect union of *God* and man in Christ, born of a woman.

“As, in the earlier ages of the world, Satan seduced all the nations to idolatry (or adoration of false Gods), so, in these latter days, has he with subtlety changed his mode of seduction, and now persuades men, that every proof of love, respect, and homage, to those whom God has honoured, is idolatry, till, in fear of this very crime, a conscientious but ignorant fear, men are brought to Arianism, and often beyond that, to what is termed *pure* Deism! The Arian, who believes Christ to be only a perfect creature, may well fear to exalt his Virgin Mother; but the Catholic feels that no love or honour, rendered to this pure creature, raised by her God ‘above other stars in glory,’—no homage, thus felt, and thus rendered, can approach to the eternal radiance of Him, who is co-equal with the Father, and unto whom is said, ‘Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever!’”

“You have put my mind into a perfect chaos,” said Lord Hervey, as Geraldine took the manuscript from his hands, and closed

it. "Surely, if it were necessary to believe all this, our Reformers would not have rejected it."

"Which of the Reformers do you mean?" said Geraldine; "for they differed and quarrelled so much, that it is impossible to quote them as a body on any one point of Doctrine: for instance, Luther believed in the 'Real Presence,' and cursed all those who called the Elements mere 'symbols.' Calvin believed in that which Luther anathematized, and, in his turn, cursed Luther's belief as idolatrous. Wickliffe, their precursor, believed in Purgatory, &c. Now, you, Lord Hervey, and the greater part of the members of the Church of England, do not think with either Luther, Calvin, or Wickliffe, on the above, and many other points, and yet you are constantly talking with warmth of the glorious Reformers, and of their divine mission, believing most innocently that these men were agreed in all essential points."

"Well then," said Lord Hervey, "we will not dwell on those particular points of difference, but will merely take their authority on the obvious Scriptural sense, against the corrupt interpretation of Rome!"

"Do you mean with reference to the communion of Saints?" said Geraldine. "I have made extracts from those parts of Luther's writings, which Mr Everard permitted me to read (the rest he said were too coarse for a woman's eye), and here is what the Patriarch of the Reformation says on the subject:—'who can deny that God works great miracles at the tombs of his saints? I, therefore, with the whole Catholic Church, hold that the saints are to be honoured and invoked by us.' And again—'Let no man omit to call upon the Blessed Virgin, and the angels, and saints, that they may intercede with God for them at the instant (of death).'"

"Did Luther really continue to believe in the invocation of the Virgin and saints, even after he had strength of mind to give up the rest of the popish faith?" cried Lord Hervey, in great surprise. "Well! it can only be accounted for by the difficulty which every one must feel in relinquishing the errors of youth for the convictions of riper years."

"And if this were the case with Luther's strong mind," said Geraldine, "if he clung to error, merely because he was accustomed to it, may this not be the case with yourself? Is it not very possible that you reject all the Scripture we have just read, the universal consent of the Christian world during fifteen centu-

ries, and the testimony of this great reformer, just because you have been taught the reverse, and—*you are accustomed to it ?*”

Lord Hervey was silent for a while ; at length he said—“ The progress of the reformed principles was necessarily slow, and we owe too much gratitude to Luther to upbraid him for what he left undone. Of course, old prejudices hung about him : but they hung more loosely on his successors, and, as Scriptural truth became more apparent, gradually fell off, to be trodden under foot, as they deserved.”

“ Now, Lord Hervey,” cried Geraldine, “ I am going to make what you will think a rash promise, but I will abide by it. It is this : I will remain as I am, a nominal Protestant, nay more, I will settle into a genuine and immoveable one, provided you can find scriptural authority for believing in the divine mission of Luther, and his confederates !”

“ Not at this very moment,” said Lord Hervey ; “ because though I could engage to prove from Scripture, that he who opposes Antichrist must be for Christ, yet, in order to collect the most weighty texts which bear on this point, I should like some preparation.”

“ I allow all due preparation,” said Geraldine, “ and wish to argue with you simply by the words of Scripture ; and as you bend to no Church authority, but confide in your own judgment on Scripture, while I have an equal claim to an accurate judgment, we must consent to keep as close as we can to the plain and obvious meaning, or we shall wander away from each other for ever.”

“ Oh, not for ever !” interrupted Lord Hervey.

“ I trust not,” replied Geraldine : “ and yet what can be expected, when each is resolved that the other alone shall yield ?”

“ And surely it is woman’s graceful part to do this,” said he, taking her hand, which lay on the book near him.

“ I will yield,” replied Geraldine, withdrawing her hand, “ on the conditions I mentioned before, of finding from Scripture, that the Protestant Reformers were divinely commissioned to preach against the Church which had nurtured them.”

“ Surely their commission, if not absolute, was implied,” said Lord Hervey, “ in the corruptions of the Church against which they preached ; that Church which had revolted from God, and which therefore God had cast off ?”

“There is nothing in Scripture to justify this assertion, that the Christian Church could be cast off by God,” replied Geraldine. “On the contrary, if we turn to Isaiah, and the prophecy is applied by St Paul to the Gentile Church, we shall find this to be impossible.” She then read from the fifty-fourth chapter, ninth and tenth verses,—“‘As I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed. saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee!’”

“But this promise was to the pure invisible Church,” said Lord Hervey.

“It was made,” continued Geraldine, “to that Church, which by the same prophet, is compared to a mountain on the top of mountains (*Isaiah* i. ii. 2. and *Mich.* iv. 1); by the prophet Daniel to a ‘great mountain filling the whole earth,’ (ii. 35), and by St Matthew to a ‘city set on a hill which cannot be hid.’”

Geraldine then employed the arguments which the Warden had used with Miss Graham, to convince Lord Hervey that a Church which was to preach, to baptize, and to exercise authority, must be visible; and brought him to own this necessity, while she fully granted the invisible nature of the spirit’s operation on the hearts of the elect.

“Well,” said Lord Hervey, “I am glad to find that we are disposed to agree thus far. Indeed, if you would adhere to Scripture alone, I should be full of hope; but, unfortunately, you bow to that most unscriptural thing, ‘tradition,’ and here we must part.”

“But if I cannot prove a Scriptural warrant for obeying tradition,” said Geraldine, “I am ready to give it up.”

“Are you?” cried he; “what a concession!”

Geraldine smiled, and read the following exhortation of St Paul,—“Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the *tradition* you have been taught, whether by word or our epistle.” She then read the 13th and 14th verses of St John’s Third Epistle,—“I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee. But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face.”

I should have no objection,” said Lord Hervey, “to obey

the unwritten commands of the inspired Paul or John, but tradition, like a snow-ball, has rolled on, till it has bid fair to crush the truth. There is no warrant for tradition, or, in other words, oral instruction on matters of faith, beyond the text which refers exclusively to the apostle."

"I promise to abide by Scripture on this point," replied Geraldine, "and Scripture will tell you that oral instruction in matters of faith, continued, by the Apostles' commands, to be given by their successors; for St Paul says to Timothy, 'The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.' I do not believe," said Geraldine, "any more than yourself, that Timothy, or his faithful successors in the ministry could, in their instructions, venture to broach anything new. I believe that they merely transmitted the faith once delivered to the saints."

"But if these instructions were of any real import," said Lord Hervey, "why were they not in the Bible?"

"How can I 'dive into the secrets of the Most High?'" replied Geraldine. "It is sufficient for me to know that Scripture itself tells me that it is not the sole rule of faith, and commands me to obey likewise those oral instructions, which, by the undeviating testimony of Catholic divines, have come down to us from the times of the apostles. I cannot disobey them without disobeying the Bible; for the command to 'hold fast' the unwritten word is just as explicit as the command to hold fast the Epistle."

"But if these traditions contradict Scripture, we must be sure that they are spurious, and unworthy of any trust," said Lord Hervey; "and that is exactly what these Romish traditions do most palpably."

"Indeed, I cannot agree with you," returned Geraldine; "and I do not believe that the Holy Ghost, speaking by the mouth of St Paul, would direct us to anything spurious, when it is promised that He would 'guide us into all truth.' You may think that the Catholic traditions contradict Scripture, because you have a very false idea of what those traditions are,—trusting, in fact, to nursery tales, and *Protestant tradition*, for an account of them,—and yet, in common with all the Protestants around you, following them most strictly in several articles of faith!"

"Impossible!" cried Lord Hervey. "My faith is grounded on the plain declarations of Scripture. I endeavour to obey every thing laid down for me in the New Testament, and nothing beyond."

"Indeed!" said Geraldine smiling. "Then while you prepare for me Luther and Calvin's credentials, I will give you some proofs of your unconscious obedience to traditions. But all this must be for some other time. The bell has already rung for the servants' dinner, and poor Kelsoe is waiting in my room to put on my habit; I must go."

"Come back to me, my love," said Lady Hungerford, "before you mount your horse. I must just say one word quite alone with you—not even for Hervey to hear."

"In which case," said Lord Hervey, laughing, "I must be off with the best grace I can."

CHAPTER XII.

*"Whatever passes as a cloud between
The mental eye of faith, and things unseen,
Causing that brighter world to disappear,
Or seem less lovely, and its hopes less dear;
This is our world, our idol, tho' it bear
Affection's impress, or devotion's air."*

It was not till the evening that Lady Hungerford could say her "one word" to Geraldine, her other guests having claimed her attention at the time appointed for the private communication. In the mean time, the younger party rode during the fine part of the day, and on their return, while Geraldine was sitting with Lady Winefride in the drawing-room, and hearing, to her regret, that the latter had arranged to return to her cottage at Burnleigh, on the following day, Lord Hungerford entered, bringing with him a letter from General Carrington,

"Oh! this is joy!" cried Geraldine, kissing the well-known writing.

"Yes!" said Lord Hungerford, "and therefore I came to see that joy, more than to hear of the General, for I had my own letter."

"It is four months since I last heard," said Geraldine, as she

opened the letter, and for a while read silently. At length she smiled, and said, "What spirits he is in! all hope, all ardour, in what he thinks the just and legitimate cause."

"Ah! confound legitimacy!" cried the Whig lord. "And so Don Carlos is getting on?"

"Here is the letter, my lord," said Geraldine; "perhaps it is of later date than your own:" and she handed it to him, after she had taken off the seal, which she kissed, and placed in her bosom.

Lady Winefride smiled. "I see that you are a lover of relics," said she; "and the knowledge that your father's hand has pressed that seal, endears it to you, especially as you have parted from the letter."

"Can I make an extract from this part of the General's account?" said Lord Hungerford, pointing to what he referred.

"Certainly," replied Geraldine; and the earl withdrew to his study, when Geraldine, seizing Lady Winefride's hand, exclaimed,—"Well may I value every part of that dear letter. It is the last I can receive from him, before he knows the truth—to him, the fatal truth, of my conversion to the Catholic Church."

Lady Winefride pressed Geraldine's hand, but was silent.

"I wrote to my father," continued the latter, "when the Warden first arrived at Elverton, and I had made up my mind to consult him respecting my religious doubts. Although there has been little congeniality between the two, they have always paid mutual tribute to each other's worth and talent, and my father will naturally conclude, that so deep a theologian as my uncle, Dr Sinclair, must have quieted all my doubts, and fixed me in peace and gratitude within the pale of my own Church. This supposition, also, would be confirmed by my last letter, in which I did not mention the subject, for the reason, that my mind having become once more disturbed, without foreseeing what the termination would be, I did not wish to grieve him with anxieties when at so great a distance from me. All this false impression will now render my task more awful. I have arrived at my present position by degrees: but to him it will seem as the riven heavens, and the falling thunderbolt!"

"I will not lull you into a false security on that point," said Lady Winefride. "In earlier life, General, then Major, Carrington, was most intimate in the family of my sister and

brother-in-law, Sir Hugh and Lady Mary De Grey, and at their house, I have witnessed a violence, an almost wildness, on the subject of the Catholic faith, which makes me now tremble for you, unless the increase of years have brought with it moderation and liberality."

"My beloved father is all moderation and liberality," replied Geraldine, "on every other point. Indeed, on this, I have never heard his particular sentiments, but, though generally silent, as if from determined self-control, his look is terrific, and conveys to me the impression rather of his having received some dreadful injury from a Catholic, than of his having been influenced by any party zeal against the opposite creed. Can you not, Lady Winefride, recall something of that nature having occurred, at the time of your intimacy with my father?"

"There were some circumstances of mystery, connected with General Carrington, at that time," replied her ladyship, "which, as he was too lofty to explain them, perhaps irritated and fretted him. An unhappy estrangement took place on the subject, between him and my brother-in-law, and I grieve to say, that no open reconciliation was effected before the death of Sir Hugh De Grey,—although we may trust that in their hearts there was peace and brotherly love."

The entrance of Mrs Torrington and Miss Scotney put a stop to this painfully interesting conversation. Geraldine retired to her room, a thousand flitting conjectures succeeding one to the other in her mind. She had thought of her poor house-keeper's death-bed confession, the instant Lady Winefride had mentioned "circumstances of mystery which General Carrington was too lofty to explain." She also remembered her maid Kelsoe's knowledge of the General's estrangement from the family of De Grey, and from that family's faith, and that faithful attendant's terror and grief, at the bare possibility of a union between herself and Sir Eustace. Geraldine trembled at the step she was about to take, less from dread of her father's anger, than from grief, at being the one to open the deep wounds which, she felt convinced, he must have received from the perfidious or ungrateful conduct of some Catholic. The more, however, Geraldine reflected on her father's smiling and almost contemptuous toleration of all creeds, the more she was persuaded, that he was little likely to care about the religious opinions of any man, provided his "life were in the right;"

till, at length, she was encouraged by this conviction to hope, that he might not, after all, be so very deeply pained by her adoption of whatever creed might suit her ; and, supported by this hope, she joined the party at dinner, and received their congratulations on her 'good news from Spain,' with a cheerful countenance, though her heart still throbbed with anticipated ill

"Pray, Lord Hungerford," said his lady, "are you aware that Sir Eustace de Grey called here this morning ? He sate a long while with Lady Winefride and myself, and was so chatty and pleasant, that I forgot all the letters and notes I had to write ; and I was so sorry that Lady Anne and Miss Carrington were out riding all the time, and Hervey too !"

"And why did you not detain him, to escort his aunt home to-morrow, and keep us all alive in the interim ?" said Lord Hungerford.

"Because he would not be detained," replied Lady Hungerford. "He made some bad excuses, and was so positive, that, at last, I was piqued, and let him depart."

"Eustace has guests at 'the Moat,'" pleaded Lady Winefride, and "guests towards whom he would be desirous to show all due respect."

"A couple of priests, I dare say," said Lord Hungerford, laughing. "Why, I should be delighted to see them ; we have all sorts of priests and preachers in this house ! Eh ! Major, a glass of wine ?"

In the evening, Lady Winefride took leave of Lord and Lady Hungerford, and of their guests, as she had arranged to return at an early hour to Burnleigh on the morrow, it being the eve or vigil of Christmas Day. "I will take my leave of you, my dear young friend," said she to Geraldine, "as you pass to your room to-night ;" and Geraldine, pleased with the invitation, watched the time-piece in the drawing-room with impatience, during the hour which succeeded, and eagerly kept her appointment ; when she found, as she had hoped, that the attendant had withdrawn.

"Miss Carrington," said her ladyship, taking her hand, "were I to follow the dictates of my heart, it would be to invite your attendance with me, during this holy season, at the solemnities to be observed at Burnleigh, but I still recommend your avoiding, instead of seeking, your Catholic friends, until you shall have sufficiently questioned and probed your own heart

When this has been done, and your final determination taken, should that determination be to 'forsake all,' in order to follow Christ in the way he has appointed, of submission to his spouse, the Church, then make use of me: you will not find me wanting. These few words, 'Come to me!' or, 'I will be with you on such a day,' will be sufficient. I have watched you silently but with scrutiny sufficient to praise Almighty God in you. Farewell!"

"Ah! Lady Winefride," cried Geraldine, shrinking from the praise given her, "perhaps I shall delay a long time, perhaps I shall falter,—shall never have the courage. Oh! it is more difficult by far than I expected! What is to become of me when you are gone?"

"My presence here," said Lady Winefride, "can do nothing for you, and might prevent my future services, which, I again repeat, shall be devotedly yours. I urge you to nothing but *fidelity to your convictions!* Do not act until these are fixed: but when fixed, remember the awful fate of him, who knew his Lord's will, and did it not!"

"Yes! I do! I will!" cried Geraldine. "Oh! my God, have pity on me! Lady Winefride, pray for me!"

Some hours after Lady Winefride's departure on the following morning, while Geraldine, apparently engaged in some fancy-work, was absorbed in deep and painful thought, she was invited by Lord Hervey to walk. "You injure your health over this embroidery frame," said he; "and I am sure that Miss Graham will accompany us."

"I think not," said Geraldine. "Katherine is writing letters of importance to Scotland, by to-night's frank: there will be no post to-morrow."

"And cannot you walk without your Katherine?" said his lordship.

"Not very well," she replied; "but I can work without her."

"What will you do, when Miss Graham is compelled to leave you?"

"Why, I must reflect, that this is a leave-taking world, and look forward to meeting Katherine again, either here or hereafter."

"You are not in your usual spirits," said Lord Hervey, gazing earnestly on Geraldine's countenance, and then turning quickly round, to ascertain that no one was in the room besides

themselves. "You are not in spirits,—you are not happy! How, in fact, can you be so, when, with your affectionate and sensitive feelings, you are led, by these new and pernicious friends of yours, to desert the old and faithful ones, who have loved you from your childhood."

"I do not desert them in heart," said Geraldine. "I shall ever think of them with tender gratitude:"—a rush of overpowering emotions here so nearly overcame her, that she rose, and would have left the room, but Lord Hervey sprang towards her, and, seizing her hand, exclaimed, "Stay! hear me once,—for the last time, perhaps. Oh! if argument, if prayer, if warnings, are all unavailing, listen, for pity's sake, to but one request: it is, to wait,—to pause,—to reflect, during some months. You cannot refuse so small a boon, Geraldine!"

"Until the return of my father, I cannot, without his express permission, take any public step towards entering the Catholic Church," said she, with regained composure.

"Geraldine!" said Lord Hervey, again addressing her by that familiar name, and raising her hand to his lips, "you have seen that I love you!"—his voice was here checked with emotion, and he turned away; while she remained motionless, and as if nerved to bear all that she had so long foreseen was to come upon her. Lord Hervey again turned towards her, and, in a firmer voice, added: "After four years of separation, during which other and dear ties forbade any remembrance of the bright and joyous being, who had smiled on all but me, I return to find this being all, and more than all, I had before known, and yet lost to me for ever!"

"Did I not believe that every trial is sent for our purification," at length replied Geraldine, "I should mourn that we had thus met, to give mutual pain, without any beneficial result. Had I not believed, my lord, that you were to pass the winter at Geneva, I should have remained at the Hall. Still, you were made acquainted with my religious opinions by Lady Hungerford, from the first hour of our renewed acquaintance."

"Acquaintance!" echoed Lord Hervey, much hurt.

"Our renewed friendship, I mean," said Geraldine. "You were immediately told of my wish to be a Catholic, and if, on that account, you believed me lost to you, I was so, and must continue so. My determination is irrevocable."

"Still, you will take no decided step at present," said Lord

Hervey, eagerly. "You tell me that you cannot,—thank God for that! And now that you must pause from all this controversy, will you not let some softened feelings have place in your heart? Will you not prove to your Protestant friends, that at least you leave them with regret?"

"They can never know all I feel," said Geraldine, turning pale, yet by great effort restraining her tears. "My dear Protestant friends must ever live fondly in my remembrance. They have every claim on my gratitude. Why should I ever love them less? It is I, and not they, who have changed!"

"Yes!" cried Lord Hervey, "it is *you* who have changed, in spite of early precept and example,—in spite of spiritual advice and experience,—in spite of admonition, of entreaty,—of tears,—of ill-requited, though devoted, love!"—

"Oh, stop!" cried Geraldine, "this is cruel! Do you think yourself the only sufferer? Do you think that my heart is less torn than your own? Can you not feel, that it is far more terrible to inflict pain, than to endure it?—and on me falls this double load. Oh, Hervey! if we are about to part for ever, let it be in kindness!"

"If we are to part for ever!" repeated he: "Geraldine, first and dearest love, tell me, would you be mine, could you return my affection, if our faith were still the same?"

"It is simpler and better to tell the truth," said she, gently and mournfully. "Were I still a Protestant, I *could* return your affection;—and now," added she, as the tears gushed from her downcast eyes, "be generous, and leave me!"

"Oh, my God!" cried he, clasping his hand to his forehead, "keep thou my senses, for I know not what it is right to do! Geraldine, let us not part! be mine, and let the secret of your unhappy change remain within your breast and mine; I will never reproach you!"

Geraldine trembled violently, yet disengaged herself from the arm that would have supported her, and said,—“Whatever I am, I must be that openly; yet, where I can yield I will do so. Let me have the free and open exercise of my religion. I will use that indulgence with moderation, and bless you for your goodness.”

"I dare not! I dare not!" exclaimed he, with increased agitation. "I am bound to the cause I have espoused so publicly; I cannot permit the open avowal of your faith. I grieve——"

"Then, my Lord," said Geraldine, "if we cannot meet on equal ground, we must decidedly part. I ask of you nothing but toleration: you ask of me a dereliction of principle. I cannot submit to despise myself, which the moral coward must ever do; and whatever I am to God and my own conscience, *that* I will dare to be before the assembled universe!" Her eyes flashed, and her cheeks glowed, as she said this, in a tone which brought the colour likewise to Lord Hervey's face.

"But," said he, imploringly, "do not reject this, in the first moment of indignation. Think calmly, when alone, of all that really and intrinsically would be yours. Think, also, of all that must mar the domestic peace and public integrity of the man, who, in these days of controversial conflict, openly unites himself to a Roman Catholic! Think of the conspicuous part I have taken in this war of opinions, and that I am born the heir —"

"Lord Hervey," interrupted Geraldine, "I request that you will add no more. Enough, and more than enough, has been already said. We never can be more than friends, but we may continue to be such, respecting and forbearing one another. Farewell!"

"Oh! give me one of those first dear looks," cried he. "Listen once again,—for the last time . . . my loved, lost Geraldine, farewell!"

CHAPTER XIII.

How wilt thou then look back and smile
On thoughts that bitterest seem'd erewhile,
And bless the pangs that made thee see
This was no world of rest for thee.

Keble.

KATHERINE Graham, having despatched her letters to Scotland, was leaning musingly on Geraldine's chimney-piece, when the latter entered. One glance sufficed to Miss Graham, who, taking both Geraldine's hands, exclaimed reproachfully, "You have refused Lord Hervey!"

"Say rather," replied she, "that Lord Hervey has refused me!"

"Geraldine! this is mockery," cried Katherine; "you have goaded him on, till, in despair, he has said something which your pride has resented, and you have quarrelled."

"Far from it," said Geraldine. "I have been softened into weakness, of which I shall blush to think hereafter:—but he talked of secrecy, of cowardly secrecy, and this to a Carrington!"

"Did Lord Hervey require more of you, than you of him?" said Katherine surprised.

Geraldine here related the point of disagreement, and said, "think you I could be happy with a man who would exact from me the concealment of my faith? Never! I am ruffled at this moment, but very soon shall I be in greater peace than if every possible concession had been made me. I shall soon feel no other regret, than that of having ever harboured the thought of compromise and fetters."

"Geraldine, lie down, I entreat you," said Katherine, "or weep, or relieve this feverish excitement by the air. Your head must ache, for your eyes are full of fire."

"Yes! I am grateful for it. I am just in a proper state for all the tedium of this evening, and all the leave-taking of to-morrow, for I must return home, of course, after Christmas Day. I feel as if this throbbing at the top of my head, and this necessity for talking, would last just so long and no longer, not that even then you will find me weak and lamenting.....No! I pant to go onward!"

"You are, at this moment, full of resentment," said Miss Graham, "and, therefore, of false strength; but do not trust to this—it will soon fail you, and the reaction will be in its turn quite as powerful."

"No! no! I shall not trust myself to dwell on the past, or on what might have been the future. I have much of vigorous action before me, and, till all is accomplished, I shall not think of repose. But tell me, Kate, are you disposed to leave Sedgemoor so abruptly, or had you not better remain here a few days, at least, after me?"

"I remain here without you, for whom alone I came?" cried Miss Graham. "No, indeed, my Geraldine; and, while on the road, I will tell you my future plans; they are perfectly incompatible with any longer stay at this place."

Owing to the departure of Lady Winefride Blount, and the indisposition of Lady Anne Scotney, Lord Hungerford, on the

announcement of dinner, led out Mrs Torrington : and the bewildered Lord Hervey, who, like our heroine, had nerved himself to all the usual routine of the day, but who was unprepared for any exertion beyond it, finding himself close to Geraldine, and far from Katherine, to whom Colonel Torrington was advancing, called out in distress, "Where is Lady Anne?"

"She has already dined in her room," replied the unconscious Lady Hungerford ; "therefore, you may give your arm to Miss Carrington."

There was no alternative for either of them, but to walk together arm in arm, and to sit side by side. Colonel Torrington and his lady exchanged looks, and the latter reported to Lady Anne, when she next visited her sick couch, that she had always said Lord Hervey meant nothing by his attentions to Miss Carrington, and that his present change of manner was intended to prove this to her, which was highly honourable : but that, in consequence, they should soon see an end to her revived Protestantism, and a fresh ardour for Romanism ! As for the friend and confidante, Miss Graham, she knew not what to think of her."

"Why, you do not suppose," said Lady Anne, "that Lady Hungerford would ever consent to her son's marrying that Scotch Amazon, even should he muster courage sufficient ; and why should he marry any one at all, so soon after Emily's death?"

"Oh ! he was always full of that sickly sensibility," said Mrs Torrington, "always in love with some one or other. This Miss Graham would manage him completely, which, after all, would be best for him. But what a daughter-in-law compared with the elegant and '*recherchée*' Geraldine Carrington."

"Oh ! but all that stiffness would be voted dignity, and that rude manner of contradicting, thought proper dash and spirit in the future Countess of Hungerford. I cannot endure either of them, but any one is better than that '*manierée*' Miss Carrington."

On the morning succeeding Christmas Day, Geraldine and Katherine, with their attendants, left Sedgemoor Priory to return to the Hall. The former had been much tried by her parting interview with Lady Hungerford ; especially as the latter declared, while tears ran down her cheeks, that it had become part of Geraldine's new creed not to feel.

It was vain did our poor heroine assure her that she felt too much

to weep. Tears were the only test by which Lady Hungerford ever ascertained the extent of her own emotions: it was also the usual and accredited mode of showing grief and affection. Besides, Geraldine did not look pale enough, to satisfy her wounded friend. The fevered spot on either cheek, and the brilliant eye, gave to all but an acute observer the appearance of buoyant health; and Lord Hungerford, also struck by the glowing animation of her countenance, as she tremblingly expressed all the gratitude and affection she felt for himself and Lady Hungerford, exclaimed—

“Well! it cannot be helped, my dear. Every body has a right to their own opinions, and to publish them likewise, if he or she think fit. It is a pity that you and Hervey cannot make it out together. I never knew much of my late daughter-in-law, and should have been proud of you but a plague on all controversy say I! I think you had better not see Hervey again before you go, poor fellow! for I fear he feels this affair more than you do!”

Several miles had been passed before either Katherine or Geraldine spoke. At length, the former inquired whether her friend had seen Lord Hervey before leaving the Priory?

“I just caught a glimpse of him, on turning out of the park gates,” replied Geraldine; “he was stationed there, but evidently not wishing to be seen. I received this last night;” and Geraldine put a letter into Miss Graham’s hand.

“I would rather not read it,” said Katherine, returning the letter; “I think it scarcely fair to intrude into his sorrow.”

“I would respect it also,” said Geraldine, “to any one else; but you are his friend as well as mine, and I still hope may become more to him than I could ever be.”

“Geraldine!” said Katherine, after a pause, “do you know to whom I was writing, during that eventful morning of your decisive interview with Lord Hervey?”

“No, indeed,” replied Geraldine, “farther than that it was to Scotland—perhaps to that Margaret Fergusson, your other dear friend, and my rival!”

“It was to her brother, Kenneth,” said Katherine, “with whom, two years ago, I discussed more points than the famous Calvinistic Five, and to whom I hold myself pledged to be faithful for weal or for woe.”

“Oh! my own Kate, is it really so?” cried Geraldine, em-

bracing her friend. "Then why all this secrecy towards one, who has ever opened to you her whole heart?"

"Because," said Katherine, "our engagement was at first but conditional, depending upon an appointment, which he has since obtained, but which has not turned out so lucrative as he had hoped; and our engagement was for a time suspended. An additional office, however, is now attached to the former, which more than makes up the required income, although it brings with it of course its apportioned labour. I never would mention our difficulties, because I know your generosity, and I likewise know my own and Kenneth's pride! We can receive assistance from no one."

"But now all is prosperous, is it not?" said Geraldine, eagerly; "you can marry your Kenneth Fergusson now, without farther delay, can you not?"

"I suppose so," replied Katherine; "but you know that I cannot be the one to suggest that all difficulties are cleared."

"But you can tell him," said Geraldine, "that 'wearing purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day,' have not made you disdain a more humble lot with him."

"Something of that declaration was contained in the letter lately dispatched," said Katherine; "but to require such an assurance would argue but little knowledge of Kate Graham. I sent it, however; for, when a man is poor, he is apt to be distrustful."

Geraldine now questioned her friend concerning the rise and progress of this attachment, the family and connexions of Mr Fergusson, the prospect of increased income, and the probabilities of meeting her friend again, and of enjoying her happiness. Katherine entered the more readily into the details of her engagement, and expected marriage, from the generous desire she felt to draw Geraldine's attention from the subject of her own trials; and, for a time, so well succeeded, that our heroine's thoughts were peacefully dwelling with Kenneth Fergusson and his Kate, "within a mile of Edinburgh town," when the carriage stopped at the lodge gates of her own home.

Poor Mrs Kelsoe's temper was not proof against the accumulation of disappointments, which were included in this unexpected return to Elverton Hall. She had permitted hope to rise, each day, respecting her young lady's preference of Lord Hervey to the young "Roman" Baronet, till, on the Sunday evening,

this hope was confirmed past all doubt, by the conspicuous part which Lord Hervey assigned to Miss Carrington in the family devotions, and which the latter had accepted with the dignity and ease so natural to her. Mrs Kelsoe, and her great confidante, Mrs Bruce, were, therefore, only startled by what appeared to them the thralldom of etiquette, when the sudden departure from Sedgemoor Priory was first announced to them, and remained incredulous to the dark hints of Monsieur Bigôt, respecting Lord Hervey's "mauvaise fortune," till the hour of starting, when the truth was rendered too conspicuous to be longer doubted, by the estranged looks and manner of the principal actors in this painful scene, and by the absence of his lordship when the carriage was announced, to which it had ever been his post to hand its fair owner. Stiff and grim sate the faithful attendant in the travelling carriage which followed that in which Geraldine and Katherine were discoursing, and too deeply mortified and disappointed to heed the silent sympathy of the young and simple Phoebe, whose tears, as they flowed at the remembered "petits soins" of the accomplished Bigôt, might have moved a heart less bent on higher matters, than was that of Mrs Kelsoe. "I suppose you remember, ma'am, that, by your own orders, all the hangings are taken down in your own boudoir, and I am sure I don't know where you'll find anything the least comfortable!" said she, as she followed Geraldine and Miss Graham into the entrance hall.

"There are plenty of comfortable rooms," said Miss Graham, as they all followed the servant, who carried lights into the library.

"Well, ma'am, I only hope you will find it so; but no one ever yet liked this library, with a strong north wind, howling, as it always does, on this side of the house. Mercy on me! how cold it strikes! I am sure Miss Carrington will catch her death of cold."

"Not with this delightful fire, and this large screen round our dinner table," said Geraldine, trying to smile, and elude the scrutiny of Mrs Kelsoe's eye.

"Rather a contrast, ma'am, to the long dinner table, and the delightful company, we have had at the Priory, so cheerful and suitable to the season. It does seem, to be sure, so very unnatural, as it were, for young ladies to be moping at Christmas, of all times of the year, when they might spend it so differently; and such a risk too for the health."

The entrance of Mr Hilton, the steward, with the letters of that day's post, enabled Geraldine and Katherine to signify, by their deeply attentive perusal of those addressed to them, that Mrs Kelsoe might withdraw, which, at length, after many attempts to linger, she was obliged to do ; and the friends were left alone.

"Geraldine," said Miss Graham, "this letter would have recalled me from Sedgemoor, had I not returned here on your account. I must now arrange every thing for my immediate journey to Scotland."

"What, immediately?" cried Geraldine sorrowfully: "but I will endeavour not to be selfish, Katherine. The return to Scotland is full of hope and joy to you. I conclude that the letter is from Mr Fergusson."

"No!" said Katherine, "it is from my uncle Graham, and is full of bad news, respecting the health of my dear grandmother. He, and my aunt, think her sinking fast, and wish me to take advantage of his escort back to Edinburgh. He will be in London on the twenty-sixth, which is to-day, and will leave it on the thirtieth. I must join him there, in the interval. The call is too peremptory to be deferred. Dear as you are to me, Geraldine, and now dearer than ever in your accumulating trials, still my father's mother has the first claim on me. As for Kenneth," added she, smiling, "I would have made him wait some months for my return, were it only to punish him for not writing."

"Probably the letter is directed under cover to Lord Hungerford," said Geraldine, "in which case you will have it by the cross post to-morrow evening. And then, if you hear not, I shall conclude that Mr Fergusson has travelled up with your uncle Graham, and intends to surprise you by his presence in Port-

Place ; while I, as you perceive, am careful to follow Kelsoe's prudent advice, that 'young ladies should always know of a surprise beforehand.'"

The entrance of the servants with the dinner, prevented any farther conversation at this time, and, during the rest of the evening, Geraldine, whose state of excitement called for incessant occupation, made rough drafts of the various letters she must now be called upon to write. She accomplished one to her former governess, one to a friend who had taken deep interest in her spiritual conflicts, some time previous to her present inquiries ;

and these, with other letters which were written before she went to rest, were all locked up, until she should have conquered the repugnance, the almost terror, with which she thought of writing that one letter, which must be sent before every other, namely, that to General Carrington. "After my Kate has left me," thought she, "I will bind myself to this difficult task: till then, I will be solely hers!" and on this did she act, and Miss Graham encourage her to act, during the few remaining days which intervened, before the departure of the latter for London.

"I cannot but rejoice, dearest Katherine," said Geraldine, in one of their many conferences, "that a positive duty, although a melancholy one, recalls you at once to your favourite Scotland, and prevents your sacrificing yourself any longer to a friend, who, during the last six months, has been the cause of unceasing and painful anxiety to you. Well do I know, that you would have remained with me, in spite of love in the north, and popery in the south, had not Mrs Graham's illness decided for the former."

"Yes! I would have remained with you, Geraldine, although my warnings and counsels have proved of no avail. However, I cannot but see that all is arranged for us far better than we could have arranged it for ourselves. I am prevented from being a witness of that, which, in the detail, would deeply pain me, but to the bare fact of which I have at length submitted in hopeless resignation: while you, instead of your opposing and disapproving Kate, may now surround yourself with enthusiastic admirers, and solace yourself with their approbation. One parting advice I must, however, give. Let nothing induce you to admit the addresses of any Roman Catholic, before you yourself become one. I speak this, well knowing that you are by far too highly favoured by nature's and fortune's gifts, not to have many enemies."

"I defy their calumnies," said Geraldine, proudly—too proudly: "but do not talk about me just now, let us talk of Scotland. You are happy, dear Kate," added she, embracing her friend, "in the contemplation of an union, which truly deserves the name. Oh, what is the mere absence of fortune, when earthly affection and heavenly hopes are the same! I envy you your journey back to your chosen land, where alone, according to your ideas, is to be found the purity and peace of gospel. I think, Kate, that your very poverty is exquisite!"

Miss Graham smiled, but the smile was one of sadness, as she replied,—“It may be exquisite to contemplate in a poetical point of view, while nothing rough or coarse intrudes itself: but trust me, Geraldine, there are many things which can never have entered the scope of your experience, but which render poverty truly galling to the proud and sensitive mind. The personal intercourse which must be endured with inferiors, the possible intrusion of familiarity, the sense of equally ‘gentle blood’ with those who would either patronize or forget you; all this——”

“All this,” interrupted Geraldine, “would be nothing, provided that he for whom I willingly and cheerfully endured it, were possessed of sufficient real dignity, to feel unmoved by the weakness and baseness of others.”

“You have now mentioned not only my capabilities, but my fears,” said Katherine. “In spite of my regard for Kenneth, I see the one vulnerable part in the character I had thought perfect; and while I am ready to renounce much for him, without feeling it a sacrifice, I am forced to see, that, in renouncing much for me, he *does* feel it to be a sacrifice.”

Tears, a rare thing with Katherine Graham, rose in her eyes, but this proof of woman’s weakness was instantly conquered by woman’s strength. “Geraldine,” said she, “I trust that you so far understand my character, as to believe, that the paltry common-place fear of not marrying the man I prefer, weighs but as a grain compared to the heavy humiliating load of convicted disappointment in his character.”

“Katherine,” exclaimed Geraldine, “this is harsh, and too hasty also to be just. Wait till your arrival in London, and then, if you find him not—oh no! not even then, condemn a friend unheard. Remember, also, that a man is bound in honour not to press on the devoted self-denying disposition of woman, but to *think* while she only feels!”

“Do not repeat all that fashionable sophistry to me,” interrupted Katherine. “When a woman, with the full use of her intellects, consents to marry an avowedly poor man, who, at length, informs her officially that he is not rich, as if this point were a novelty to them both—when he continues, furthermore, to prate of honour, as if he knew the meaning of the word, and of exposing the dear object of his affection to privations, &c., as if this ‘dear object’ meant anything but himself—what can she feel towards him who is obliged to deceive himself before he has

the courage to deceive her ; what can she feel but contempt ? This contempt I now feel from the bottom of my heart ;—but oh ! it is hard to feel it for Kenneth Fergusson !”

“ Surely,” cried Geraldine, “ you must have some surer knowledge than mere forebodings of the worldly spirit which is to cloud your future life ? You must have received some communication which you conceal from me ?”

Miss Graham, without reply, placed in Geraldine’s hands the following letter, which had reached Elverton Hall that morning. The plausible contents might have appeared neither cold nor hollow to Geraldine, but for the news previously received of the writer’s improved income. As it was, she perused this farewell with the deepest indignation :

“ My dearest Katherine,

“ You have doubtless heard, through Margaret, of the addition made to my labours by the death of Mr Crawford, and the determination of those high in office to make each subordinate do the work formerly divided between two. A truly paltry method of retrenching the expense of public offices, for the additional salary is too contemptible to be mentioned. I do not expect to stand the labour of this mental treadmill much longer. It is perfectly unsuited to my former tastes and attainments. The exertions of my good brother, the Laird, to push me forward in the world, without untying his own purse-strings, may at length get me the long talked of secretaryship to Sir Alexander Gillespie, and exile me for some years to the Colonies. However ! be my fate what it may, it must, alas ! be a lonely one ; for I could not be so selfish as to involve the woman of my affections in hopeless poverty and misery ; and, greatly as I suffer, it will be some mitigation of those sufferings, to know that you, my ever dear Katherine, will exert the good sense and vigour of mind for which I have so greatly admired you, and endeavour to forget, amongst your more fortunate English friends, one, who can now, alas ! be only a source of pain to you. In dwelling on your happiness, I shall catch from it some faint reflection, and be rewarded for the sacrifice I now make. I shall, from time to time, hear of you through my sister, with whom I trust all those friendly relations will be kept up, which formed her happiness ;—and believe me, that no distance nor

lapse of time, can ever change the sentiments of deep respect and regard, with which I am, dearest Katherine,

Your sincere friend,

KENNETH STEWART GORDON FERGUSSON."

CHAPTER XIV.

I feel like one who treads alone some banquet hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled, whose garlands dead, and all but he departed.

Moore.

Two days after the receipt of this letter, Katherine Graham left Elverton Hall, to join her uncle, Mr Graham, in London. The parting between her and Geraldine was far beyond the mere suspension of their hourly and confidential intercourse, for each felt that much was about to be demanded of her strength and fortitude, before she again met her friend, and now, by mutual consent, these last farewells were brief, and not a tear was shed. Geraldine returned from watching the carriage, which conveyed from her the warm-hearted and faithful Katherine, and wandered through the lonely apartments. "Perhaps," thought she, "this desolation may remain unchanged, and I have heard the last friendly voice, and received the last friendly embrace, to be given me in my father's home!" This foreboding of ill, however, did not prevent her from beginning, on that day, her dreaded task, and, steady to her resolve that neither timidity nor tenderness should have power over her, she finished, by the evening, her long and painful letter to General Carrington. Giving merely a rapid sketch of her mental history, up to the epoch of the Warden's visit, she, from that date, entered more into detail respecting her progress towards Catholicity, dwelling on those essential truths in which the Protestant communities had disappointed, and the Catholic Church had fully satisfied her. She recalled to her father how often he had both ridiculed and deplored her religious anxieties and doctrinal changes, and appealed to his tenderness, whether it would not comfort him to see his

child in perfect peace? She then turned to the circumstances of her visit to, and return from, Sedgemoor Priory, disclosures as formidable as that on which they had depended; but in avowing to General Carrington that her renunciation of Protestantism had involved that also of her noble admirer, she felt that she could well appeal to her father's proud and susceptible sense of honour, treating it as a thing impossible, that a child of his could ever descend to compromise or concealment for the sake of any alliance, were it the first in the kingdom. She reminded him also of his early lessons in frankness and moral courage, and of his saying, that, when it resulted from the fear of man, "he who carried a secret carried a curse!" Little did Geraldine think that every word of this theme would be a dagger in the heart of General Carrington, whose conscience had indeed dictated these lessons to his infant daughter, and whose lofty reputation and manly bearing, had added the more convincing argument of example in all that had ever come within the scope of her observation.

The following evening, after the despatch of this important letter, Geraldine drew from her desk those already written to both her uncles. That to the Warden was carefully read again and again, a word added here, and retrenched there, where the meaning might have been expressed too concisely for clearness, or with too much amplification for strength: while that to her favourite, Edmund, after a hasty re-perusal, and a deep long-drawn sigh, was sent the same night to the Vicarage, with the hope of calling forth an answer on the next day. "Now the worst is over!" thought Geraldine; and, with somewhat lightened spirits, she wrote the following lines to Lady Winefride Blount:—

"My dear Madam,—The time has arrived more speedily than either of us, perhaps, anticipated, in which I am to prove my grateful obedience to your injunction, and to call on you for guidance and support. I left Sedgemoor Priory, on the twenty-sixth, probably for ever! My friend, Miss Graham, has returned to Scotland, and I now accept your ladyship's invitation to Burnleigh. I had hoped for the still greater pleasure of welcoming you here, but on maturer consideration of my father's character and opinions, I judge it best not to invite your ladyship's Catholic servants amongst his Protestant household during his

absence. This I have told him in a letter just despatched. I am grateful for the strength given me—pray for me, that it fail not!”

The night, which witnessed the dismissal of the above four decisive letters, was the close of the old year; and, if few even of the careless can, without some passing feeling, hear its knell struck by the midnight clock, and the instant announcement of its successor rang by the merry bells, it may be concluded, that to our heroine the memories and hopes of that hour were fraught with emotion. The several belfries in the town of Elverton were nearer to the Hall than those of the Valley Church, yet, from the direction of the wind, and the aspect of the windows, the bells of Woodbridge were those which fell the most distinctly on Geraldine's ear, and mingled with her first visions of the night, as at length, overcome by all the fatigue and agitation she had gone through during the past week, she for the first time slept profoundly.

It had long been the custom at Elverton Hall, for the tenants and household to celebrate the first day of the new year, and Geraldine, in the midst of her anxieties, had not forgotten this. She gave directions to the steward, and to the new housekeeper, that the festivities should take place as usual, and confiding in the warm attachment which the principal part of the dependents bore their absent master, she herself superintended the placing on a bracket, at the end of the tenants' hall, one of the fresh casts of General Carrington's bust, which she had found awaiting her return from Sedgemoor. If any thing could have increased the attachment which she had, from her infancy, inspired in the hearts of her dependents, it would have been this delicate appreciation of their fidelity and love; and the loud cheers, which reached the library in which she sate, were succeeded by a petition, that their dear young lady would condescend to pass along the north gallery, that they might thank her, and drink her's and the General's health. This could scarcely be refused; and Geraldine, attended by Mrs Kelsoe, looked from this appointed place of communication on the assembled inmates and guests, with smiling welcome, courtesied with her usual grace to the uproarious health-drinking, and even made a short speech, after which she withdrew, in the full satisfaction, that, however ill at ease herself, she had contributed to make eighty persons

as happy as hospitality and merry-making could possibly effect. This thought, and the expected reply from Lady Winefride Blount, cheered for a while the solitude to which she had returned in the library, where the faint sounds of music and revelry from the tenants' hall were nearly overpowered by the winter blast, which rushed impetuously through the avenue, and howled amongst the brambles. Never having been an invalid, and therefore unaccustomed to solitude within reach of festivity, Geraldine felt as though this present isolation was a foretaste of that soon to come, and in the depressed state of her spirits, she listened to, and looked around, on every thing as though it were for the last time. On other occasions, her father and herself, with their guests, had joined the tenants' feast, and then returned to talk and laugh round their own blazing hearth: but now every one seemed already gone for ever! The necessity of exertion, while anything remained to be done, had kept up the feverish excitement of her spirits, but now she must be passive, at least, till the answer should arrive from Burnleigh; and to be passive, and to wait, was, just at this time of solitude and approaching bereavement, the most difficult and painful part that could be assigned her. Another hour passed, and Geraldine, finding it impossible to fix her attention to any book, was alive only to the strange loneliness of her feelings now increased by the stilling of the distant sounds of human fellowship; while new and mysterious breathings seemed around her, and she felt that the powers of her mind were becoming unequal to struggle against the nervous sensations which began to steal over her. She pushed her chair backwards, till it touched the wall, and drew the table after her: still she could not fix her attention to any occupation. She cast her eyes around the room, and having neglected to raise the lamp, or to stir the fire, its vast obscurity oppressed her. Again she heard, or fancied she heard, the same breathing sound, and that it came from one of the large octagon windows, before the recess of which hung dark green damask curtains. Geraldine would now have given all she possessed to reach the bell, but could not; and she had not even the comfort of knowing that over-exertion of mind and feeling had alone produced this nervous state of terror. Some time elapsed, and she was still sitting erect, with her eyes fixed on the nearest recess, when, to her unspeakable relief, a servant entered, bringing a letter to her from the vicar of Woodbridge.

Her heart now beat with contrary emotions, but, desirous to prevent a recurrence of the tremor she had so painfully endured, she pulled aside the dark curtains, and entered each recess, before the servant, having attended to the lights and heat of the room, again retired. Geraldine's dread of the letter from her beloved uncle was second only to the arrival of one from Spain. She felt that humanly speaking, nothing could change her fixed mental convictions; but she also knew how peculiarly susceptible she was to gentle remonstrance and entreaty, and especially feared that, in the present weakened state of her mind, the contents of this letter might induce her to hesitate and delay, when, having made the first difficult step, all ought to be steady advance. Mr Sinclair wrote as follows :—

“ My dear Niece,—I cannot reply to your communication of yesterday without great pain, I might say anguish, of mind. Through the silent hours of the night, I lifted up my soul in prayer, for the companion of my youth, and the friend of my matured years. I prayed for your father, that the shock might neither injure him, nor recoil on you. I prayed likewise for myself, that no selfish feeling might imbitter my regrets that you have deliberately chosen to leave my simple ministry, and the venerable Church which received your baptismal vows as well as those of confirmation, and to desert that altar, where I have so often administered to you the bread of life, and where I had hoped to join your hand with one deserving of you. *Can* you renounce all this? But I reproach you not. May our Heavenly Father over-rule this evil for your ultimate good! I leave you now in words, that denote my feelings more perfectly than, in this hour of painful disappointment, I could hope to express them! They are the words of one who fought the good fight, and whom, I trust, we both shall meet, where minor differences shall be lost in the perfect love and enjoyment of Him, who will be all in all!—‘ We may die without the knowledge of many truths, and yet be carried to Abraham’s bosom; but if we die without love, what will knowledge avail? I will not quarrel with you about any opinion; only see that your heart be right with God, that you know and love the Lord Jesus, that you love your neighbour, that you walk as your master walked, and I desire no more. I am sick of opinions, I am weary to hear them, my soul loathes this frothy food! Give me solid and substantial

religion, give me a humble gentle lover of God and man. A man full of mercy and good faith, without partiality and without hypocrisy,—a man laying himself out in the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love. Let my soul be with these Christians wheresoever they are, and of whatsoever opinion. ‘Whosoever thus doeth the will of my Father, which is in Heaven, the same is my brother, sister, and mother!’ Thus felt John Wesley, and thus feels and subscribes your still devoted friend and uncle,

“EDMUND SINCLAIR.”

Geraldine pressed this letter to her heart. “Dearer than ever,” cried she, “never have I been disappointed in your Christian charity, never have you given me a causeless wound, and your reward shall be found in that sure promise, ‘blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy!’” In the letter to her uncle, Geraldine had enclosed a short but affectionate note to his wife, referring to the letter for all explanations, and entreating her never to speak to herself on a subject of necessary disunion, but to let all kindly intercourse continue on those many points of Christian union, on which the writer herself promised to dwell. She also gently intimated to Mrs Sinclair that, having found some of the deepest theologians on the Protestant side, ineffectual to detain her from the Catholic Church, it could not be expected that one of her own sex should bring forward any thing new or unanswerable. Great, therefore, was her annoyance, when, on the following morning, Mrs Sinclair was announced, and in spite of Geraldine’s reiterated entreaties, began, in all the confidence of ignorance, to enter the lists of controversy. An hour of worse than useless discussion ensued, when, becoming desperate at the total failure of her expected conquest, though she had not forgotten the weapons most familiar to her, namely, caresses, upbraidings, and tears... Mrs Sinclair, habitually incautious, uttered many things in the heat of the moment, which even she looked back upon with some misgivings, and which worked upon the naturally haughty temper of Geraldine, till she fully and openly expressed her contempt. Things were thus gathering to a most alarming crisis, when a carriage drove past the library windows, and stopped before the hall. “*I am at home*,” was Geraldine’s reply to the precautionary inquiry of the servant, before he

attended the summons of the bell, and, in a few instants, Geraldine's eyes and heart were gladdened by the sight of Mr Everard.

"And so you thought I had forgotten you," cried he, as he seized Geraldine's hand, unconscious of the presence of Mrs Sinclair: "You thought to yourself, 'Oh, yes! old Everard knows very well when he is well off, and will find it very convenient to be displeased with me, until the Sedgemoor party breaks up, when perhaps he may find his way back to the Hall.' Ha! was it not so? You know it was!"

"No, indeed," replied Geraldine. "I knew very well that you had reason to be displeased with me, but that after your anger should have passed, nothing would detain you from visiting me in my solitude—a solitude, however, of only two days' continuance;—here is Mrs Sinclair."

Mrs Sinclair feared Mr Everard, and after many kind inquiries on his part, and timid replies on hers, she departed, telling Geraldine that she would write to her, and also make her uncle write again; to which last assurance Geraldine paid little regard, feeling that the letter which she so carefully cherished could never have a successor.

"My dear girl," said the old gentleman, when they were left alone, "I come charged with every thing that is kind from Lady Hungerford. I am the bearer also of a letter to you."

"From herself?" interrupted Geraldine.

"Partly from herself," replied Mr Everard.

"Oh! why bring me letters or messages?" cried Geraldine, alarmed at the effect they might have on her. "I know the kindly feelings towards me of both Lord and Lady Hungerford; it has almost broken my heart to pain them;—I want no assurances of their regard."

"But you must read the letters," said Mr Everard: "you must not be obstinate and prejudiced as a woman, while you are candid and liberal as a theologian:" and he drew from his pocket a thick letter. Geraldine was confident that Lady Hungerford could never have written all its contents, and it was, therefore, with more pain than surprise, that she drew from her ladyship's envelope, the dreaded letter from Lord Hervey.

"Well!" cried Mr Everard, "I shall look at the old pictures about the house, or have some talk with Mr Hilton, while you read that letter—and remember that I am to take back an answer."

Geraldine's first impulse, as Mr Everard withdrew, was to throw the letter from her, while, leaning with both arms on a table, she remained for a while in painful and irritated thought, in which, however, Lord Hervey had no part, excepting as connected with Mrs Sinclair's remarks during her most injudicious visit. Geraldine, with a mind jarred and unhinged, had received all the communications of that lady with apparent contempt, but they had wounded as deeply as could have been designed. To brave the world in the cause of truth; to join the band of hitherto aspersed Christian worshippers; to sacrifice riches, and popularity, and even the softer feelings of the heart, to the voice of conscience, all this was to bear adversity in the way that exactly suited her lofty nature: but to become a Catholic when all the neighbourhood were persuaded that she did so for the sake of Sir Eustace de Grey; to refuse Lord Hervey, when rumour gave forth that the difficulties had not been on her side, but on his; to pursue the course which would appear to justify all these assertions,—this was to bear adversity in the way that was the most galling to a proud and sensitive woman, and Geraldine recoiled from her appointed task. Conscious of her weakness, she dreaded to open the letter, which doubtless would tempt her by reasonings and concessions, which she might not have strength to oppose. "The art of Satan is employed in adapting temptations to our own especial characters and tempers. Our education, natural turn of mind, family prospects, duties, difficulties, must all be considered, if we would detect the governing principle of our hearts, and learn whether worldly or spiritual things chiefly influence us. It is easy to abstain from that love of the world, to which our disposition is opposed;"—and, we may add, very difficult not to follow it in its plausible sympathy with some of our loftiest feelings. Geraldine's vulnerable point was where she deemed the fortress the most impregnable, namely, the side of womanly pride and dignity; and the enemy of souls well knew how to hide the breach he was gradually making. What no argument, no tenderness, no ambition, could effect, might yet be gained by the paltry 'on dits' of a country neighbourhood, and Geraldine once more reflected, that to become a Catholic, yet to marry a Protestant, would be to stifle for ever the breath of scandal, and prove the purity of her motives to the world.

"Why, you have never even opened the letter," exclaimed

Mr Everard, on his return to the library. "That is a confession of weakness, young lady."

"A sense of weakness is in itself strength," replied Geraldine, ousing herself, and determined to keep secret the struggle of her mind.

"Capital!" exclaimed he. "I never knew you fail in an answer yet: but come, we must seriously talk over this business."

"I do not think you are consistent in the part you take in it," said Geraldine. "You once told me not to think of Lord Hervey, for that you wished him to marry the Countess Angela; when, on the contrary, you now seem to desire this ill-starred union as much as Lady Hungerford herself could do."

"Because the circumstances are completely changed," said Mr Everard. "When I thought that you were very sensibly resolved to remain a member of the Church of England, in its true sense, acting up to all she inculcates, and becoming a guide to the ignorant, and spur to the slothful of her communion, *then* I wished you to marry a Catholic, that the prejudiced family, on each side, might learn wisdom, and cultivate peace. But now that you are determined to take this most unnecessary step, and to leave your appointed post in the Universal Church, to follow out some theories, in which, perhaps, I may too much have helped you, *now* I wish you to marry a Protestant, for the same good cause of toleration and peace. Where's the inconsistency of this? "I beg your pardon," said Geraldine, "for thinking your conduct inconsistent. I do not acknowledge the wisdom of your plan, but still, I give you credit for consistency; and now, may I defend myself, in my turn, against your charge, of unnecessarily quitting my appointed post in the Universal Church?"

"Yes! defend yourself; but let it be quickly done, that you may read your letter."

"My defence is briefly this," continued Geraldine. "I find, in the Church of England, no assistance whatever in obeying her commands, and I leave her, for the express purpose of fulfilling them in the ancient Church, whence she borrowed them."

Mr Everard laughed; but, faithful to his trust as ambassador, he recalled his young friend's attention to the important letter, which lay still unopened, and at length prevailed on her to give it an attentive and earnest perusal. As Geraldine continued to fix her eyes, if not her attention, on the last paragraph of the

letter, Mr Everard marked the conflict which was reflected on her brow. She then left the room, but, within an hour, she returned, and proved, by the reply which she authorized him to give to Lord Hervey, that, if the conflict had been severe, it had been succeeded by a resolve, as calm as it was determined.

CHAPTER XV.

The door is closed—but soft and deep
Around the awful arches sweep
Such airs as soothe a hermit's sleep.

From each carved nook, and fretted bend,
Cornice and gallery seem to send
Tones that with seraphs' hymns might blend.
Keeble.

On the third day following Geraldine's decisive conversation with Mr Everard, the travelling barouche rolled once more through the lodge gates, on the Sedgemoor and Burnleigh road. Of the two occupants, one was weeping, while the other, her arms folded, and her looks fixed on vacancy, seemed perfectly unobservant both of the objects which were rapidly passed, and of the grief of her companion. Ten miles were traversed in this manner, and the first exclamation from either lady or attendant, was called forth by the sudden motion given to the carriage by the coachman, in turning the horses from the well known cross road, which led to the gates of the Priory.

"Pretty creatures," cried Mrs Kelsoe; "it is as hard to turn a horse as a Christian, from what he's used to."

At the entrance of the town of Burnleigh, one of the servants descended to inquire at a shop the exact direction to the house of Lady Winefride Blount, and, as Geraldine heard the reply, "Next to the Catholic chapel, down the lane, first turning to the right," she recalled these words of St Augustine,—“Among the many considerations that bind me to the Church is the name of *Catholic*, which, not without reason, in the midst of so many heresies, this Church alone has so retained, that, although all heretics wish to acquire the name, should a stranger ask where the Catholics assemble, the heretics themselves will not dare to point out any of their own places of worship.” Geraldine now

felt the reality of her vicinity to the friend who was anxiously awaiting her arrival, yet this caused no emotion. Wound up to that pitch of strength and self-possession, necessary for the task she had imposed upon herself, she had, during the three days succeeding Mr Everard's visit, accomplished all that yet remained to be done, before taking the decisive step of becoming the guest of Lady Winefride Blount. More letters had been written, several painful conversations had taken place with persons in the neighbourhood, who conscientiously thought it their duty to give their warning voice to the infatuated Miss Carrington; and, after another scene with Mrs Sinclair, and one still more distressing with the distracted Mrs Kelsoe, Geraldine had nerved herself to hear the solemn farewell of her beloved uncle and his children, and to tear herself from the circling arms of her favourite little cousin, who continued to upbraid her with—"You don't love your god-child any more!" Lady Winefride's invitation had been frank and cordial, yet, as the carriage now turned down the wooded lane pointed out by the shopman, Geraldine thought of the fond hearts she was grieving and forsaking, and, as she recalled Lady Winefride's reserved manner, sighed to think that mere kindness and calm approval was to greet her at the dwelling of her Catholic friend. During the last three painful days, her feverish excitement had amounted to irritability, the most distressing to her tender conscience. She now desired not to feel: it became almost a prayer, and, at length, mistaking exhaustion for apathy, she assured herself that the stunning of her own susceptible feelings was a permanent change, in answer to her repeated supplications. The carriage now stopped before the entrance to the first Catholic dwelling she had ever visited, and Geraldine was confirmed in her hopes of passiveness of feeling, as she followed the servant, who announced her arrival, in dignified self-possession, which seemed to have become a necessity arising from her present isolated position.

Geraldine had expected to find Lady Winefride alone, and was surprised to hear the sound of other voices issuing from the door, before which the servant stopped. He paused, however, but for an instant, and then, proceeding to a small room beyond, opened the door, and Geraldine found herself encircled in the arms of Lady Winefride. A long and fervent embrace was given, while tears rolled down the cheeks of the elder friend. At length, the emotions of the heart found utterance, and, while she still held the

silent Geraldine to her bosom, the long unheard tones of approval were poured unrestrainedly from the lips of the hitherto reserved and cautious Lady Winefride.

"Thank you, my kind friend," said at length the unhappy girl; "I owe you much gratitude, and by and bye, perhaps, I shall feel it. At present, all is dried up here"—placing her hand on her heart,—“and what is worse, the spiritual as well as the natural affections are gone: the understanding too is obscured. I do not remember why I am about to become a Catholic; I have forgotten all the train of reasoning once so clear to me. I am proceeding mechanically, and often doubt whether my brain is capable of guiding me.”

Again Geraldine submitted to the fond embrace of her friend, and felt the tears fall on her brow and cheeks; but she would willingly have rushed from her, and from every one, and have courted the wild solitude of the heath which was spread before the windows. It was a relief when, after a while, Lady Winefride proposed to show her to the room allotted to her, and, after placing her on a sofa, gave orders that no one, not even Mrs Kelsoe, should disturb Miss Carrington. “I too will leave you for an hour, my poor child,” said her ladyship; “and I exact but one promise, that you will not leave the room till my return.”

“I will promise not to leave the room,” said Geraldine, anxious to be left alone; and Lady Winefride withdrew. “How ungrateful I must seem, how ungrateful I am,” was Geraldine's first reflection; “but the greatest repugnance to every thing Catholic seems to possess me. Am I really about to be entrapped into a darkly mysterious creed, and this in spite of the tears and warnings of so many virtuous and learned of the Protestant Church? Surely I have arrived at this termination of my spiritual journey by slow and well authenticated steps. I was, during the whole of that time, in full possession of my intellect and judgment—that is, I believe so. I have no powers of reasoning left now. Am I to wait, or to go forward? Is this deadening of my faculties a trial of my faith, or a warning sent me, or a temptation? Oh my head—my head!” Incapable of farther thought, she continued to lie on the sofa for some time, nearly insensible. The first thing which recalled her benumbed senses, was the gentle sound of music, so soft, so dreamy, so ethereal, that Geraldine at first fancied she had been dead, and had awakened to angels' harpings. Soon the tones swelled into rich effect. She

recognised the organ, and the mingling of bass and treble voices, which rose and fell in waves of solemn sound. She still lay motionless, but no longer cold, suspicious, ungrateful. What no partings, however tender, no greetings, however joyful, no censure, no praise, could effect, was wrought by the unexpected and soothing influence of sacred music. She now wept violently, and then exhausted, yet in calm and peace, listened to the solemn modulations of the organ, as the voices ceased. In regaining her powers of memory, Geraldine recalled to mind, that, from the position of the room in which she had been left, she must be close to the chapel; she also remembered having heard Lady Winefride speak of the inestimable privilege of living where no illness, nor stormy weather, could prevent her attending the services of her Church; and she concluded that, from this very room, her friend had, during a long illness, been favoured by the high privileges she so greatly valued. Rising from her recumbent posture, Geraldine softly opened a door on the side whence she had heard the music, and found herself in a large curtained tribune, or gallery pew, whence, without being observed, she could see all that passed in the chapel below, into which she now looked with intense interest.

The winter's day was drawing to its close, and the chapel was in deep twilight, relieved only by the lights at the altar, and those in the choir, which latter were only discovered faintly gleaming through the crimson curtain which surrounded the organ. The voices now began, alternately solo and chorus, to sing the "Litany of our Blessed Lady," and, at the touching fall of the voice, at each "Ora pro nobis," Geraldine's tears again fell, till, at the close, when the subdued voices of the whole choir supplicated more than sang, the thrice repeated "Agnus Dei," she dropped her head, and wept the most delicious tears she had ever known. They were the harbingers of returning hope and love. Geraldine no longer doubted and trembled. She felt that, in her present earthly desolation, her God was with her, never to forsake her; and she almost fancied an audible voice saying to her, "Oh! thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" More hymns succeeded; one of these was the well-known Christmas hymn, "Adeste Fideles;" and the whole concluded with Beethoven's simple and touching "O sacrum Convivium," during which the Benediction of the blessed Sacrament was given, and Geraldine's head was bowed, in Catholic faith and awe, with

the rest of the flock. All now silently departed, the priest and the acolytes into the sacristy, the general congregation, by the public door, into the road towards the town, and the family of Lady Winefride Blount through a private door, into the vestibule of her dwelling-house.

"I can love you and thank you now," said Geraldine, throwing her arms round Lady Winefride's neck. "I am happier and better, and, for the first time since leaving Sedgemoor Priory, I have wept."

"I rejoice to hear it," replied Lady Winefride. "I fixed on Thursday for the pleasure of receiving you, because I expected that the effort of coming to me would be such as nothing but heaven could repay, and, on that day, we have, during the time of indulgence, the privilege of benediction in this chapel."

"Do not speak of the effort of coming to you," said Geraldine; "but rather that of leaving those I have now left, as if for ever,"—and she again wept unrestrainedly. At length she inquired, whether there was not a large party visiting her ladyship at that time?

"No," replied Lady Winefride. "I have no room for a large party. A few intimate and devout friends are with me; but to-day all but myself and you dine with our good priest, Mr Conway, at the chapel-house, and we shall be left to an unreserved tête-à-tête, for I threaten you with no introduction, not even to Mr Conway, till to-morrow."

The friends then descended to their quiet dinner; and, after a few hours, when rest and calm sympathy had restored Geraldine's wasted strength, her spirits gradually revived, and she gratified her kind friend by smiles and questions, and would even have entered upon the history of her departure from Sedgemoor, and all that it involved, had not this and every subject of excitement, been interdicted by Lady Winefride.

From the same dread of over-pressure on a mind already too highly wrought, this experienced friend postponed the discussion of any theological questions, till Geraldine should have passed some days in the calm enjoyment of Catholic privileges, and refused to reply to the remaining "conditions," which Geraldine told her must be conceded to her, before she could become a Catholic. These were,—to be allowed to receive the sacraments both kinds—to continue the constant reading of the Scriptures to be dispensed from saying the Litany of Loretto—and to

have nothing to do with indulgences ! Lady Winefride smiled, and replied, " Rest assured that Mr Conway will give you every comfort possible, by either leading you to hope for what you now desire, or satisfying you so completely respecting the wisdom of the Church, as to leave you willing in all things to sacrifice your private judgment to her divinely delegated authority."

" But these are matters of discipline, not of dogma," said Geraldine.

" The power of the Church to grant indulgences," replied Lady Winefride, " is a matter of faith, not of discipline. But remember your promise, to cease from controversy until after to-morrow. Give those pale cheeks, and hollow eyes, some chance of recovery."

" I cannot recover till I am perfectly convinced of all, even the smallest things, proposed for my belief in the Church I am about to join," said Geraldine: " but I have this consolation, I am sure that eventually I shall be satisfied. It is more from curiosity, and from a remembrance of incurable stupidity respecting these indulgences, that I am so anxious to have them either explained, or abolished."

" We must endeavour to do the former," said Lady Winefride, again smiling ; " for the Church is little likely to change, or her children likely to desire a change, in one of her most consolatory and blessed favours."

" I know that ' indulgence ' is not leave to commit sin," said Geraldine ; " and I therefore begin to suppose, that it must mean that, during the time of indulgence, Catholics are exempt from their more rigorous and penitential duties, that they keep holiday from confession, penance, and such constant church-going, and, in fact, are, for the time being, Protestants."

" On the contrary," said Lady Winefride, " never are the confessionals and chapels more thronged than during the time of indulgence."

" And you just now spoke, I remember, of the benediction being given every Thursday, during the indulgence. But what is the indulgence then ?" cried Geraldine ; " I give up guessing in despair."

" Mr Conway will tell you," said her ladyship, " and with additional effect, as you are come to us at the very season, this being the Christmas indulgence, beginning on Christmas Day, and not to end till the Epiphany."

On returning at an early hour to the room, which Geraldine already loved from its vicinity to the chapel, she delayed ringing for her maid, as Lady Winefride lingered with her, and they both passed into the tribune.

"Oh!" cried Geraldine, sinking on her knees before the front of the tribune, "how beautiful, how holy! Every thing breathes of God!"

As she said this in a raised tone of voice, Lady Winefride gently pressed her arm, placing her finger on her lips.

Geraldine looked round, to ascertain the reason for this caution, but perceived no one. Her friend was now engaged in prayer, and Geraldine remaining on her knees, also raised her heart to God in gratitude and love. When they had returned into the room, Lady Winefride explained herself, by saying, "Did you perceive the lamp suspended before the altar? It burns day and night, in token to all who enter this chapel, that the blessed sacrament is kept within the tabernacle."

These words and the look of awe and devotion which accompanied them, rested forcibly on Geraldine's mind, and the extent of Catholic faith on that point of sublime mystery, succeeded to, and superseded, every other which had lately occupied her thoughts; and, filled with emotion, she again stood before the entrance to the tribune.

"This chapel," said Lady Winefride, still speaking in a subdued tone, "was, during the times of persecution, covered with a false ceiling, and the only entrance to it was through this very door, which, on any alarm, was backed by wainscoting kept ready in the house, and presented the appearance of a shallow closet. This house has never passed from the possession of Catholics, although the chapel house has been witness to many changes in its possessors. You are therefore sheltered in the very bosom of Catholicity, dear child, and may its treasures be yours in rich abundance. To-morrow the hour for Mass is nine o'clock. You can enter the tribune, curtained as it is, in your dressing-gown, should you wish to rise so soon after your fatigues."

"I shall certainly rise," said Geraldine, "unless taken ill: but tell me, Lady Winefride," added she, suddenly looking round the room, "why am I thus privileged? how do you yourself enter the chapel? is there another door to this pew? Oh, I see it is the case. I have your ladyship's own room."

"You have," said Lady Winefride; "and I bless the Divine Providence which has led you to it."

"But I cannot bear to benefit at your expense," said Geraldine. "Oh! why do you spoil me by all this indulgence?"

"If I found it any great exercise of self-denial, to leave my favourite room for a favourite friend," replied her ladyship, smiling, "it would be a proof that self-indulgence, the vice of old age, was creeping fast upon me. So be comforted, especially as you are aware, that we Catholics have some superstitious pleasure in renunciation of all kinds."

"Oh, I cannot be reconciled to this," said Geraldine, "and you ought not to insist upon it, my too kind friend. Why not let me also have pleasure in renunciation?"

"To renounce your own will," said Lady Winefride, "is by far the most difficult and meritorious thing which any one can attempt; to the natural heart, it is like the camel passing through the needle's eye; and especial grace can alone effect it. Let me see you begin your Catholic life by consenting, against your will, to make use of all that I have endeavoured to arrange for your comfort: and now, good night; Almighty God protect and bless you."

CHAPTER XVI.

Never in my breast
Did ignorance struggle so with desire
Of knowledge. * * * * *
So on I far'd in thoughtfulness and dread.

DANTE, *Carcey's Translation*

GERALDINE found in Mr Conway, the Catholic priest of Burnleigh, much to disappoint, and much to delight her. The former, however, consisted merely in the good man's being too fat, too red, and too jocular, to please her over-refined and fastidious taste; while the latter was inspired by the deep piety, strong sense, and varied information, which, accompanied by the

sweetest benevolence, was ever ready for those who required them. Geraldine soon imparted to him her remaining perplexities, and the conditions which she must insist upon, before she entered the Catholic Church ; and after some desultory conversation on these topics, she entreated him, first to explain what the Catholic Church really meant by granting indulgences, and plenary indulgences, and even selling them ?

“ As for selling them,” replied Mr Conway, “ you may as well ask, why Judas sold his Divine Master for thirty pieces of silver ; for the Catholic holds, that to be concerned in buying and selling the spiritual treasures of the Church is a sacrilegious crime ; and while we lament that such infamous transactions should ever have taken place, we look on them as treason against the pure doctrine of Catholicity. We do not retort upon the Church of England that she sanctions simony, because we often see and hear of advertised, as well as secret, transactions of that nature, respecting benefices, with the cure of souls annexed to them. And the assertions by Bishops Watson, Porteus, and other Protestant divines, respecting the Catholic doctrine of indulgence, is exactly in accordance with all their other wilful misrepresentations of the ancient Church.”

“ I almost begin to despair,” said Geraldine, “ of ever understanding the truth.”

“ Your mind has been bewildered by all you have heard and read on the subject,” replied Mr Conway ; so that what would have been an easy task to one simply ignorant, is rendered difficult by previous misconception. Let me then dislodge these imbibed notions, by telling you first that indulgence is not, and never could be, leave to commit sin of any kind, past, present, or to come. Secondly, that indulgence has nothing to do with forgiveness of sin, or with the eternal punishment due to it. Thirdly, that it implies no exemption from repentance or from penitential and other good works. Fourthly, that it is not the transfer to sinners on earth, of the overplus goodness or justification of the saints in Heaven, through the ministry of the Pope. And now, Miss Carrington, having told you what an indulgence is not, let me tell you what it is. Indulgence then is a relaxation of the canonical penance enjoined by the Church, in which we believe is contained the actual remission, by God himself, of the whole, or part, of the *temporal* punishment due to sin in his sight. You, who are doubtless well acquainted with your Bible,

will be enabled to recall many instances of the Almighty pardoning the guilt of sin, and remitting the eternal punishment due to it, and yet leaving a temporary punishment to be endured by the penitent sinner. Thus, for example, the sentence of spiritual death, and everlasting torments, was remitted to our first father upon his repentance; but the sentence of corporeal death was never remitted. You will remember also, that, when God reversed his severe sentence against the idolatrous Israelites, He added, ‘Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them.’ This visitation was in temporal punishment. Again in the case of King David, that model for penitents, the inspired Nathan tells him,—‘The Lord hath put away thy sin,’ that is the eternal punishment of it—but he adds, ‘Nevertheless, the child that is born unto thee shall die,’—which was the temporal punishment of his transgression. One instance more. When David’s heart smote him for the pride and vanity which led him to number the people, the Lord pardoned him, but still left him his temporal punishment, giving him the choice of war, pestilence, or famine. I said that I would give you but one instance more; but I must recall the penitential conduct of the Ninevites, and the temporal punishment which they voluntarily undertook, in order to avert the just wrath of God; which works of penance were not only accepted, but their example held out to our imitation by Jesus Christ himself, when he tells us, that, at the last day, this people will rise up in judgment against us, if we do not copy their example.”

“This appears to be the only instance,” said Geraldine, “in which the eternal and the temporal punishment were both cancelled. I suppose that, in the Catholic Church, the eternal punishment is remitted by absolution, and the temporal punishment by indulgence. My mind used to be confused between these; but no wonder, considering the perpetual misrepresentations given me on the subject of indulgences.”

“In the early Church,” continued Mr Conway, “the penances, or temporal punishments, which were often very severe, were, according to the honest simplicity of that age, performed in public or, at least, made no matter of secrecy. In these times of morbid sensibility, and where, from difference of creed, public penance would be almost impossible, the Church permits a more private mode of penance, and grants the indulgence, to her penitent children, of substituting works of mercy, of

secret devotion, and self-denial, for the ancient canonical penance."

"But," said Geraldine, "I hear of plenary indulgence, which means a full and perfect indulgence. In that case *all* the temporal punishment is remitted; and Catholics become, for the time being, Protestants."

"Before you make us like Protestants," said Mr Conway, "you must hear the conditions of a plenary indulgence. Those granted to the faithful in the four districts of England, are at the times of Christmas,—the first week of Lent, Easter, Pentecost; the feasts of Saints Peter and Paul; the Assumption; the feast of St Michael, and that of All Saints. At these times, instead of severe and public penance, before being admitted to the privileges of these great festivals, the Church exacts but this preparation, First, that the faithful confess their sins, with sincere repentance, to a priest approved by the bishop; Secondly, that they worthily receive the holy communion; Thirdly, that, if their state and condition will allow it, they give some alms to the poor, either on the eve, or the day, of their communion; Fourthly, that, on the day of their communion, they offer up some prayers to God for the whole state of the Catholic Church throughout the world, for bringing back all straying souls to the fold of Christ, for the general peace of Christendom, and for the blessing of God upon this nation. These are the conditions on which the temporal punishment is forgiven, or, in other words, the indulgence is granted," continued Mr Conway; "the difference between this penitential preparation and that laid down before some of the other festivals, being too inconsiderable to detain you with it. You will perceive, that for the Church 'to give leave to commit sin' on the holy conditions I have just mentioned, is too absurd to be admitted by any rational mind."

"Protestants never read or hear of these beautiful preparations for the penitent's approach to the sacred festivals of his Church," said Geraldine; "and, while they rail at indulgences, they enjoy them self-granted and unconditionally."

"And, therefore, without a blessing," rejoined Mr Conway.

"And now, Mr Conway," said Geraldine, "that I have overcome my objection to indulgences, nay, more, that I think them most wise and holy, I take courage to tell you that I dislike excessively the use of the word 'penance.' It conveys still to my mind the notion of heartless, mechanical work, under a

heavy taskmaster. Why do you not use the word 'repentance,' which implies a change of heart?"

"But would it be wise, or even rational," returned Mr Conway, "to abolish a word, which is understood in its full and beautiful meaning by all the Catholic Church, merely because the deserters from her vilify and misuse it?"

"For the sake of concession to Protestant prejudice," said Geraldine, "it were better to call it 'repentance.'"

"But we cannot," said Mr Conway, smiling, "prefer a part to the whole. The two words are not synonymous. Penance includes repentance; but contains likewise 'confession' and 'satisfaction;' and, in this its full acceptance, it ranks among our sacraments."

"Ah! that word 'satisfaction,' alarms me no longer," said Geraldine; "I understand it to mean the *practical* part of repentance."

The conversation was here interrupted by Lady Winefride, who came herself to announce the early dinner, which had been thus arranged, in order that a long evening might be given to a project, which she had much at heart, and of which Geraldine was already apprized. This was the forming a regular choir of amateur singers, that High Mass might be performed, every Sunday and festival, in the Burnleigh chapel, which had hitherto been left to the chance compassion of visitors, or to the hired and expensive services of public performers from S——. Geraldine was enchanted at this opening for her vocal powers in the service of that Church, to which her whole soul was devoted. She had promised her venerated friend to lead the contr'alto voices, and to assist, by her scientific knowledge of music, in all the rehearsals: and now, in all the pleasurable excitement at having so interesting and soothing a task before her, she hastened to the party already assembled in the dining-room, when the first person she saw advancing eagerly to greet her, was Sir Eustace de Grey. At another moment, this meeting would have been still more full of emotion: even now, surrounded as they were by the prose of life, each felt the sympathy of the other, and before Geraldine had withdrawn her hand from De Grey's warm grasp, her eyes had filled with tears, and it was some time before she could recall her thoughts from the home she had perhaps forfeited, the friends she had forsaken, and all the sorrow she had known, since the renewal of their acquaint-

ance in the abbey ruin. The first rehearsal, however, of the projected Church music, was an interesting topic to all at table, and Geraldine, recalling her thoughts from the past, entered with enthusiasm into the various plans proposed for the good government and prosperity of the choir. All the party were in high spirits, none more so than the good priest at the bottom of the table, and Geraldine reminded De Grey of his having so often expatiated on the simple and heartfelt cheerfulness of Catholics, when freed from the constraint of those who might misjudge them.

"I have never been in English Catholic society before," said she, "and you can scarcely imagine the continued interest I have, in listening even to the most commonplace observations, from those who believe such sublime truths."

As Geraldine said this, De Grey looked very much as if he *thought that she could scarcely imagine the "continued interest with which he listened even to the most commonplace observations" that fell from her: but before he could reply, Lady Winefride, addressing him, said, with rather pointed meaning; "Our choir, Eustace, starts under favourable auspices. In the first place we have the unexpected advantage of Miss Carrington's rich tones, to lead the contr'alto parts, and, to my joy, I now hear from my friend, the Rev. Mr Turner, that our dear Angela will soon bring her cherub notes for the leading soprano."

"Oh! what delightful news," cried Geraldine, with such genuine and evident satisfaction in her look and tone, that Lady Winefride smiled in reassured happiness, and De Grey, turning to the lady seated beside him, discussed the merits of Webbe, Ricci, Paxton, Novello, and other sacred composers, who had condescended to write for small choirs. The lady he addressed, hesitated about joining the choir, on account of the unconquerable dislike she had to binding herself to anything, however pleasant or praiseworthy. From this arose some raillery, respecting the vows of nuns and of wives, and then, returning to the inconvenience of engaging rashly in this amateur choir of Burnleigh, the fair lover of indolent freedom appealed to Geraldine, whether it were not better to delay beginning, until there should be at least two to each part. "Now just conceive," added she, "the thralldom in which Sir Eustace is about to place himself, when there is no bass voice but his own."

"Surely," replied Geraldine, "the same voice could join

occasionally, which gave forth such rich and feeling tones, the other evening, at the Benediction, and which, far beyond the other voices, conveyed to my heart the full meaning of the sacred words: I think Lady Winefride told me that it was a Catholic resident, who sang that evening. Cannot he bear his part?"

"He is quite ready to do so," said De Grey, colouring violently.

"Do you mean the bass voice at Benediction, last Thursday?" said the lady smiling. "I am afraid that Sir Eustace will gain little by *his* assistance." And the truth now flashing across Geraldine's mind, that she had unconsciously given this flattering tribute to De Grey's own powers and expression, she became still more confused than himself, and never loved Lady Winefride more truly, than when she gave the signal for retiring to the discussion of 'Chump Books,' 'Long Books,' and 'Motet Books,' in the drawing-room, where, until the parts assigned each singer should be sufficiently perfect to prevent the necessity of talking and practising, the rehearsals were to take place, instead of in the chapel.

Two young ladies arrived shortly after, announced as Miss Somerville and Miss Grant. The former, who had too violent a cold to enable her to sing, but whose zeal would not permit her to remain at home, had brought with her a young Protestant friend, whose musical talents were noted in the neighbourhood, and whose clear soprano voice would, she thought, enable the choir to dispense with her own. Lady Winefride greeted her unexpected guest most cordially, thanking Miss Somerville for having prevailed on her to favour the choir, at the momentous point of starting; and the gentlemen now entering, her ladyship sate down to the instrument, and modulated through major and minor keys, to the entire satisfaction of Geraldine; while poor Miss Grant, whose countenance denoted anything but happiness, continued to whisper to her ardent friend, that she ought to have told her she was bringing her to sing with Roman Catholics, which she had not fully explained; and that she did not know what her father would say, if he knew she was going to "sing High Mass!"

"And I am sure I know not what Mr Conway would say," returned Miss Somerville, laughing at the term used by her friend. "No one but the priest can sing High Mass. How-

ever, you are not called upon by this party to sing *at High Mass*, either; we only ask you to assist in the practising till I am recovered."

"But what words I shall have to sing," said Miss Grant, with increasing terror and dislike; "all in Latin, and idolatrous! Oh, indeed Ellen, if I had understood that the sacred music you begged me to join, was the popish mass, I never should have let you hurry me off as you did."

"Come, young ladies," cried Lady Winefride, who, during ~~the~~ the latter part of this dispute, had been consulting with those most experienced, respecting the choice to be made of the music before her; "here is a desk, with its lights between every two persons; and now, Eustace, take to each desk a 'Chump-book,' and look out Webbe's *F*, in three parts, for the 'Kyrie' and 'Gloria,' Paxton's 'Credo,' and Ricci's 'Sanctus,' 'Benedictus,' and 'Agnus Dei.'"

In about ten minutes more, all was arranged, voices cleared, Lady Winefride had promised to give the tenor his note at a formidable part, and the first burst of the Kyrie was given, when, lo! a fresh delay! Miss Grant had failed in courage, when actually pronouncing the Latin with Catholic accent,—the Latin of the mass, which she had been taught to consider the Devil's own tongue, and had shrunk away, leaving her poor friend to make a despairing attempt at the treble solo in 'Kyrie Eleison,' which totally failed. No one at that moment felt proper compassion for Miss Grant but our heroine, whose own fears and scruples, scarcely yet overcome, led her to feel for one still blinded and deceived. She could not be spared, to take a soprano part, because, directly her true and steady contralto left her companion, (a young person with a magnificent, but untaught, voice) this voice losing its guide, immediately ranged after soprano, tenor, bass, "in wandering mazes lost;" and Lady Winefride, giving up this impracticable measure, turned round to the now silent circle, exclaiming,—“Will any one explain to Miss Grant the words we request her to sing, while I practise over parts of the 'Credo' with Mr Barker, our nervous tenor?"

"Oh, I will," cried Geraldine, joining the young lady, who had retired to the farther end of the room, in a state of great annoyance and alarm. "I am sure that were I to translate th

words of the Catholic service to you, Miss Grant, you could not object to any part ; for I conclude that you are not a dissenter, in the Protestant acceptation of the term."

"Dissenter!" cried Miss Grant, "no indeed. My father is curate of Burnleigh."

"Then," said Geraldine, "he must love and admire the Church of England Liturgy, and is in the constant habit of saying with yourself and the rest of his congregation ; ' Lord have mercy on us : Christ have mercy on us ! ' Should you have any scruple in singing, as well as in saying, these words ?"

"Of course not," replied Miss Grant.

"Well, then," said Geraldine, "You can sing the Kyrie Eleison without farther scruple ; and if so, can you object to join, as with the choir of the heavenly host, in singing ' Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.' ' We praise Thee, we bless Thee ; ' and so on through the whole of that part in the Church of England Communion Service, beginning in the Latin ' Gloria in excelsis ?"

"Oh ! I did not know about that being sung," replied Miss Grant. "Of course I would sing that."

"Have you, then, any objection to singing the Belief, or ' Credo ?"

"What a question ! to be sure I have not."

"Or any shrinking from this declaration : ' Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, the heavens and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory.'"

"Oh no ! for those sublime words are also in the Church of England Communion Service."

"And perhaps you have heard before, ' Blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord : Hosanna in the highest !"

"Yes I have, they are the words of those who spread their garments and palm branches before our Lord, in his triumphant entry into Jerusalem."

"Then if you are not only acquainted with all this, but admire and are touched by it, what think you of these concluding words : ' Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us ; give us peace !"

"Indeed," said Miss Grant, rather hurt and piqued, "you were determined, ma'am, to select exactly those parts of the

service, which, as a Christian, I must love and respect, and you tell me nothing about the rest of it."

"I suppress nothing," said Geraldine; "I have carried you through the regular service of the choir, at High Mass. The 'Offertory,' which is changed according to the festivals, is not to be sung to-night, for we cannot yet tell whether the vocalists will be ready by Easter, or must wait till Whitsuntide, for their first performance; but you could not object to the Easter Hymn, or to the hymn for Whitsunday."

"Certainly," hesitated Miss Grant, "in what you have told me, there does not seem anything so very objectionable; but still——"

"Objectionable!" at length cried De Grey, in a transport of indignant enthusiasm; "Objectionable! Grant me patience, Heaven! How long are the inspired words of the angel who brought us good tidings of great joy, and those of the multitude of the heavenly host, to be suspicious to the Protestants of England, when uttered by the mouths of Catholics! The very sentences, also, which Protestants have retained in their Church Service, as expressive of the most sublime and heartfelt devotion, these are superstitious, idolatrous, blasphemous, from the children of the ancient Church."

"How could I tell!" pleaded Miss Grant.

"Et vitam venturi sæculi: Amen," now sang forth Mr Barker, giving thereby notice that he had conquered the difficulties in his part of the Credo; and every one being impatient to recommence, Miss Grant was again handed to her post, and conciliated even Sir Eustace by the correct and feeling manner in which she performed the leading part assigned her.

CHAPTER XVII.

Ave Maria! Mother blest,
To whom caressing and carest
Clings the eternal child;
Favour'd beyond archangel's dream
When first on thee in tenderest gleam,
Thy new-born Saviour smil'd.

Keeble.

GERALDINE had sunk to rest, after the harmony of that evening, in a state more nearly approaching happiness than she had known for years. The holy words pronounced by those she trusted, and the touching music which had accompanied them, followed her even in sleep, and mingled with the visions of the night. That solo, which the bass voice had taken in the "Gloria" was again sung, every inflection was remembered, and, in this visionary repetition of the evening, the chapel, not the drawing-room, was the scene. Angela de Grey likewise was there, in lieu of the little Protestant. It was she who took the first solo in Ricci's "Agnus Dei," and stood with her hands clasped, and a cowl over her face, uttering such unearthly yet lovely sounds, as an Eolian harp best gives. Then Sir Eustace sang not as he had first done, but poured forth deep and solemn moans; and when it came to Geraldine's turn, she gasped and could not utter a note, and all the congregation waited, and looked up, till, at length, with a despairing effort, she awoke to the unusual circumstance of discovering the reality to be better than the fiction, and was happy to lie awake a little while, in the security of her newly found happiness.

On the following morning, Geraldine reminded Lady Winefride that Mr Conway had promised to devote an hour each day to her remaining doubts and difficulties, until she should cry "enough! I am a Catholic!" A message was accordingly sent to the chapel house, and, after some time, Mr Conway appeared, having been detained by peace-making.

"You have been indeed well employed," said Geraldine, "there is no office to which a surer reward is promised."

"And now," said Mr Conway, smiling, "I am to be peace-

maker between you, Miss Carrington, and some still unexplained doctrines of the Catholic Church, and where I see a willingness to know, and not to combat, the truth, I am delighted to be thus called upon. We, yesterday, got over the terrible difficulty of indulgences, that is, I trust we did so. Perhaps you will prove to me that you perfectly understand the Catholic doctrine on this point?"

"I understand," replied Geraldine, "that, as Christ gave to his Church power to remit the eternal punishment of sin, on the sincere repentance of the sinner, so did He likewise bequeath to His Church the power of remitting the temporal punishment under certain conditions. If this mode of viewing absolution and indulgence be correct, I shall find little difficulty in remembering to distinguish between them. And it strikes me as a curious cavil in Protestant writers, that, while they have retained the power in their own Church of canonical punishment, they should object to the merciful part of commutation of punishment under certain holy conditions."

"St Paul," said Mr Conway, "saw fit to forgive the temporal punishment which still remained due to the guilty Corinthian, after his sincere repentance had obtained absolution. The Council of Trent," continued he, "proposes nothing more to our belief, upon the subject of indulgences, than that 'the power of granting them hath been given by Jesus Christ to his Church, and that the use of them is salutary,' adding, that it 'should be retained with moderation, however, lest ecclesiastical discipline come to be enervated by an excess of mildness,' which shows, that the manner of dispensing indulgences has *discipline* chiefly for its object."

"But oh, Mr Conway," suddenly exclaimed Geraldine, "I had forgotten the most difficult part, the only terrible part of indulgences,—it is the carrying them into purgatory. I cannot believe that priests on earth can have influence over the state of separate spirits!"

"Nor does the Catholic Church assert it, in the sense which your objection seems to imply. She teaches, indeed, that indulgences are beneficial to the souls in purgatory; but she expressly declares, that they operate, not judicially, or authoritatively, but simply by way of assistance or satisfaction,—depending for their efficacy on the merits of Christ, which are offered to God in recompense for the sins of the deceased, and deriving

the application of these merits from the execution of some good work, performed for that purpose by the living members of her body. It is clear that, in this doctrine, there is no undue assumption of authority 'over the state of separate spirits.' The influence exerted, is the influence of the merits of Christ; the authority claimed by the Church is, that of assigning the conditions, on which, in certain cases, these merits shall be applied: and to accuse her, therefore, of asserting an improper jurisdiction, for thus applying them, is no better than to say, in reference to another point in which you are already satisfied, that each individual who breathes a prayer for a soul in purgatory, arrogates to himself an 'influence over the state of separate spirits.' And now for your next difficulty."

"The next which occurs to me," replied Geraldine, "are the terms applied to the Virgin Mary in the Litany of Loretto. I feel her to be 'blessed among women,' I rejoice that all nations should call her thus; she is indeed 'highly favoured,' 'full of grace;' and, if I find such joy in the perfect communion of saints in prayer, I must surely feel more love and confidence in this exalted creature's prayers for me, at the throne of grace, than in those of any other saint in glory. I can say with the whole Catholic Church, 'Holy Mary, pray for me;' but I shrink from giving to the created mother the titles and attributes which I ever felt were for the uncreated Son, her God as well as mine. I see a prayer book on that table: let me state my objections, and hear your defence, my dear sir, to every line of this Litany." Geraldine then opening the "Garden of the Soul," at the "Litany of Loretto," which is used in private, as well as in public, by every Catholic, made a running commentary on it in the following manner:—"There can be nothing to alarm us in the opening of the Litany. On the contrary, the supplication to the Holy Trinity, to 'have mercy on us,' and the change, directly we invoke the blessed Virgin, to the simple 'pray for us,' show at once the distinction made by the Church between the creature and the Creator. I love all her titles also, as Mother and Virgin; but now follow those which I wish explained. I do not, perhaps, object to '*Mirror of Justice*,' or '*Righteousness*,' because that she must have been, if full of grace; but, '*Seat of Wisdom*,' that appears to me to apply only to God. '*Cause of our Joy*,' is, of course, in reference to her bringing forth our '*Joy*,' our salvation. and I do not object to the poetical

appellations which follow: they appear fanciful, but they probably refer to prophecy concerning this wondrous creature. My disapproval now begins . . . How can the Catholic Church venture to term the created Mary, '*Ark of the Covenant*,' '*Mother of Heaven*?' '*Refuge of Sinners*'? These high and glorious titles belong solely to Christ. I finish my protest against this Litany, by objecting to call the blessed Virgin, '*Queen of Angels—of Patriarchs—of Prophets*,' &c. Not that I mistake the sense in which this is understood; but it is a hazardous term to use, when we address our God as King of Heaven. It is placing her on seeming equality, and it is inviting the Protestant assertion, that the Catholic system is borrowed from Paganism; it is, in all appearance, the Jupiter and Juno of the Mythology, and I will frankly own to you, my dear sir, that I am hoping against hope, when I call upon you to explain and justify these titles given by your Church to the blessed Mary."

"Miss Carrington," replied Mr Conway, "you deserve to be set at rest, for your observations on this, and every point on which I have had the pleasure of conversing with you, show solid thought and discrimination, as well as pious sensibility. You are right in conjecturing that most of the terms of respect and love, given to our blessed Lady in this Litany, are taken from the prophecies concerning her, which prophecies are, by Protestant commentators, interpreted to mean exclusively the Christian Church. When David says, in the forty-fourth Psalm, '*The queen stood at thy right hand*,' &c., you do not accuse him of placing the Church on an equality with God: therefore, in seeking for the figurative meaning of these expressions, when used towards our blessed Lady, we must, in common fairness, be guided by our immovable doctrine, that there is but '*one God*,' and with this doctrine ever present to your mind, you will readily rejoice in acknowledging the sublime dignity, to which, as mother of the world's Redeemer, the blessed Virgin is exalted above the other created inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem. It is as Mother of God, that she is termed '*seat of wisdom*,' He being the eternal wisdom whence alone she is replenished. The ark of the Old Testament contained the covenant of the old law, and was holy, being sanctified by what it contained. So likewise is the blessed Mother holy, and called the *ark*, because she has borne Him, who is the '*Mediator of the new covenant*,' just as she is called '*Morning Star*,' from being

the harbinger of that bright day which has brought immortality to light. The other expressions to which you object, '*Health of the weak*,' '*Refuge of sinners*,' refer to our trust in her unceasing prayers offered for us to the throne of her Eternal Son. Thus, you will find, that in every prayer, litany or hymn to the Virgin Mother, the great mystery of our redemption is the theme, and that every striking title, and endearing epithet, addressed to her, is founded solely upon our adoration of the Divinity which overshadowed, and was born of her."

Geraldine was much interested in following Mr Conway through this explanation, and declared herself, at length, satisfied, respecting the use of these high titles in honour of the Mother of God. "I will rest satisfied," said she, "with all you have explained to me to-day. My remaining difficulties are not forgotten, but I have every hope of their being dispelled, and I must not monopolize your precious time."

"In truth, I have an engagement," replied Mr Conway, looking at his watch: "but only tell me the hour which would be the most convenient to you each day, and I will so arrange my other affairs as to reserve that hour for Miss Carrington alone."

Geraldine, with many expressions of her obligation to Mr Conway, for the time and thought which he had bestowed on her, now took leave, and went in search of Lady Winefride, who had promised to read her some interesting documents relating to the execution of those celebrated adherents of the Stuarts' cause—the Earl of Derwentwater, Lord Kilmarnock, and others.

Lady Winefride, however, was engaged with a poor woman, and Geraldine, while waiting her return to the drawing-room, carelessly took up the newly arrived county paper, when the following paragraph caught her eye:—

"It is no longer a subject of conjecture that, the beautiful and accomplished heiress, whose retreat has hitherto bid defiance to every gallant siege, has now fled into the ranks of popery; this flight, which is said to have taken place at night, from E——n Hall, to the cottage of a high born devotee of that school, having occurred some days since. Rumour, with its hundred tongues, is still busied in affixing different motives for this 'Hegi' Some insist that the secret but constant visits of a

popish priest in the vicinity have effected this *soi disant* conversion: others, that an attraction of a more tender nature is the motive; a third class confine their observations to the mistaken military ardour of a certain gallant general, who, without reflecting that 'the better part of valour is discretion,' has quitted the command of his own castle, and, regardless of domestic foes, lingers to assist the cause of despotism in a foreign land. We understand from good authority, that the fair 'renegade' will shortly embrace the double chain of hymen and popery; the plans of ambition and of interest, on the part of a certain impoverished baronet, having proved successful over feminine credulity."

"Impertinent! contemptible!" cried Geraldine, throwing the paper from her, and standing erect, like the image of her proud father, as Lady Winefride entered the room.

"Is *this* the result of your long conference with our good priest?" said her ladyship, startled at what she conceived a fresh misconception on Geraldine's part, of some Catholic doctrine.

"Lady Winefride," said Geraldine, again taking the paper, and pointing out the insulting paragraph, "You will perceive that, from respect to you and yours, I cannot continue your guest."

Much surprised at her young friend's manner, and still more by these words, Lady Winefride read what was given her. At first her colour also rose, and her countenance took that fixed determined expression which it had borne during Geraldine's first acquaintance with her. Soon, however, this passed away, and, at the climax of the insolent insinuation, she smiled.

"You can smile, Lady Winefride," observed our too sensitive heroine; "I cannot! To think that vulgar crowds will, from this malicious paper, dare to utter their ignorant calumnies, and pretend to understand a character like that of Sir Eustace de Grey—this makes me feel as if I were determined to tread at once on the neck of this hydra, by taking leave of you, even were it for ever—but I cannot smile!"

Again did Lady Winefride smile, and, with all the open benignity which her countenance had lately worn, she said—"There are other modes of slaying this 'hydra' than that which you propose. Remain quietly here for the present. It is far

better for us to send Eustace into banishment, than to part, until letters arrive from General Carrington. In the meantime, it is possible that the arrival of Angela may permit me to publish the engagement, which I trust may be fixed beyond farther doubt between her and my nephew."

"And well would it have been," said Geraldine, "if the unaccountable mystery of this engagement had not continued so long."

"It shall continue no longer for you," replied Lady Winefride. "I am at liberty to explain the peculiar circumstances under which Angela has been placed, and which exonerate her from any charge of caprice in an affair, which, with her sensitive conscience, has been more painful perhaps to her than Eustace. His position, however, is one of some trial, and I would that he were either wholly unshackled, or wholly bound!"

Geraldine's heart beat at these last words, she even forgot the annoying paragraph, in the interest they excited; but the destinies of Eustace and Angela de Grey were not to be unveiled to her at that time. Lady Winefride's other guests entered the room, and necessarily occupied her attention. Morning visitors also called, and filled up the time till dinner; while Geraldine retired to feed on somewhat turbulent thoughts. Hitherto the child of prosperity, and of that better part of prosperity, the golden opinions of all who knew and spoke of her, Geraldine could not bear the degradation (so she felt it) of being misjudged by the public. She could not yet submit to the only touchstone of her submission to God's designs respecting her, of bearing reproach and evil report for His sake. She said in her heart, as many other weak children of God have said, "Any thing but this!" but this was, from its very nature, the one thing appointed to the high-minded Geraldine Carrington.

CHAPTER XVIII.

With two wings a soul is lifted up above earthly things; that is, with simplicity and purity.

Thomas à Kempis.

IN the deep window-seat of the convent-parlour at N——, sat the Countess Angela de Grey, watching the merry troop of pensioners, that, frolicking round the young nun who had charge of them during this hour of recreation, passed from their appropriated wing of the building, and bent their steps towards the avenue, which led from the Convent to the high road, the limit of their walk being half way down this avenue, the whole extent of which was two miles. The fair creature who followed them with her blue eyes, and faintly echoed their merry laugh, might, in that evening hour and darkened room, have passed for one of those youthful pensioners detained in penance. Her fair auburn ringlets fell on a cheek and throat of childhood's colouring, and her fairy figure was dressed with the simplicity of that age. Yet, as she turned to greet the lay sister, who entered with the evening's logs for the parlour fire, it might be seen that thought, and suffering, and bereavement, had left each their traces—that girlhood, and first womanhood, both, had passed, and that Angela de Grey was thirty.

As the lay sister crossed the room, one of the logs of wood escaping fell on the floor, and before the exclamations of the sister were over, the Countess had sprung from her seat, and seized the refractory billet, which she placed on the fire.

“Take care of the splinters with your little hands, Countess,” cried the old woman, smiling.

“Why, sister Martha, this is not the first time I have helped you to carry wood,” said the Countess Angela. “Do you not remember the great heaps we used to collect for you during recreation, while old Cecily was fancying that our exertions were for her? but you were the favourite.”

“Ah! and I used to tell you, when you pretended to be preparing for works of mortification, that the greatest of all was having no favourite.”

"So you did, sister Martha, and you never spoke more wisely."

"I never spoke wisely in my life," said Martha, bluntly.

"Well, then, you can repeat wise things," said the Countess.

"Yes, I can do that, thanks to our holy rule. There strike the seven minutes! How I do waste my time!"

"What, in talking to me?" inquired the Countess, laughing.

"I wish I could have had you at the Bavarian Court, sister Martha; what a treat you would have been!"

"Much better for you to come back to us, and forget a wicked world," replied sister Martha.—"What should I do at court?"

"Upon my word, I do not know," said the Countess, still laughing, and embracing the uncouth lay sister, "excepting that it would have been a fine opportunity of suffering."

"Ah, but we are not to do extraordinary things, when simple ones will serve us. I have got plenty of opportunities, within this enclosure, of suffering, and so will you, if you come among us, Countess; no fear of that. I must go now: have you any of the nuns coming to you to-night, or do you go to the work-room, or noviceship, till Angelus?"

"Neither of these, sister Martha, but something still better. I am going to reverend mother's room, at half-past seven, to remain till the Angelus. In the meantime, I shall amuse myself, never fear."

"When you were a pensioner," said sister Martha, "bless you! you kept a bead of your rosary for me, a poor sinner."

"And when I was a fine court lady," replied the Countess, "I did the same. I never forgot to say an *Ave* for you, sister Martha, every night, and to go to communion for you, on every anniversary of your feast."

"Bless you, bless you; whether your vocation is to be for the world or the cloister, you'll live and die a saint," said the lay sister, hurrying away.

"Oh, but you forget what a beggar I am myself for prayers," said the countess, following her. "Pray for me, sister Martha, that, in the spiritual retreat I am about to make, the will of almighty God, respecting my future life, may be declared to me."

"Yes! yes! I'll pray," said sister Martha, "but depend on this, that Almighty God would rather work an open miracle, than that such a soul as yours should be led into error."

An hour from this time, the great bell tolled and rang the

"Angelus Domini," which was echoed by that in the dormitory, at the farther end of the convent. The Countess Angela was still sitting with the Prioress, when summoned to commemorate the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation. Both instantly sank on their knees, and, as the second toll gave the signal for the humble undoubting reply of the chosen Mary, Angela de Grey felt calm in the assurance, that, in the choice she was about to make, the will of God would overrule her own; and, casting aside all her doubts, her scruples, and anxieties, she said, from the bottom of her heart, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word!" After this last of the canonical summons to prayer, strict silence being always preserved in convents, the Prioress pressed the hand of her companion, and passed along the upper cloister to the work-room, where night prayers were said: while the Countess descended to the chapel for the purpose of private devotion, until the portress should come to conduct her and her attendant to the visitors' quarters, which, as well as those of the father confessor and assistant priest, were on the opposite side of the quadrangle, at the back of the convent. The chapel, at this season of the year, was in total darkness by the hour of night prayers, excepting from the lamp which burned day and night before the tabernacle; and, after the distant sounds were hushed, of the nuns collecting from the different corridors to the work-room, all was silence till the closing Litany, when the repeated "*Ora pro nobis*" came in full, yet softened, effect on the ear. All this to a stranger would have been most imposing, and this, in its religious sense, it was to her who knelt alone in the alcove beneath the choir, but to a 'convent girl,' the romance and excitement of the cloistered life is superseded by a loving confiding sense of home, of childish joys, of early friendships with fellow-pensioners, of devoted attachment, nay, almost worship, for some chosen nun; of those eras in the life of every young Catholic, more especially marked in a convent education; of her first confession, her confirmation, and the blessed festival of her first communion! Neither are the examples of poverty, humility, purity, meekness, silence, ever wholly lost on the generous, uncalculating piety of childhood, examples more effective far than precept, however well administered! The proud, the vain, the turbulent pensioner, has often recalled, in other scenes, these lessons of the heart, and has felt their purifying and soothing effect, while others, having lost the ties which

detained them in a cold, sad world, have returned, to find all the young springs of warmth and mirth gush forth anew amidst the scenes of their childhood. And thus it was with Angela de Grey.

An orphan from the age of eight years, she was placed by her uncle and guardian, Mr Richmond, in the school at N—— Convent, where its present superior was then the principal instructress. Her guardian, and other friends, came occasionally to see her, but, as no regular vacations are permitted at the convent schools, the little orphan may be said to have known no other home than the cloistered retreat at N——, until the age of seventeen, when for the advantage of foreign masters, and as an introduction to the circles to which her birth entitled her, she was taken by Sir Hugh and Lady de Grey to Munich, where a high office at the Bavarian court fixed them during several years. Here a brilliant career opened before the ‘convent girl,’ which, with most of her age, would have dried the tears of regret, and effaced the scenes of her humble, simple childhood. But with Angela it was not so. At the age of twelve she had declared to the confessor of the convent, that she had a decided vocation to be a nun, and a nun of that especial order. At sixteen, she repeated the same declaration; and, although the good father encouraged her as little, this time, in her girlish fancy, as heretofore, yet he thought more seriously of her inclination, and, on her leaving him, nearly heart-broken, comforted her by the assurance, that, if her call were from God, no change of scene and mode of life could detain her from obeying that call; but that, if gratitude and attachment towards the nuns, or any other human feeling, influenced her, in fancying a vocation when she had it not, the world would assuredly undeceive her. Angela remembered this, when, two years having passed at Munich, the wish, or rather the command, of the king was conveyed to her, that she should listen to a proposed alliance with the young Baron de G—ffe. Her early dreams, for so they then appeared, were renounced in favour of reality! But the predictions of the confessor were fulfilled, that a true call from God to a hidden life can never be resisted, except by the perverse in heart. These apparent dreams of childhood had been the guileless offering of her pure being to Him, and were accepted; while the apparent reality of the present was indeed the dream. Angela had retired from the court gaieties to a neighbouring convent, there to make

a general confession and spiritual retreat, previous to her marriage; and to that convent, after a fatal fall from his horse, while hunting, was the body of Baron G—ffe conveyed!

The following year, Angela returned to England, but her yearnings after N—— Convent were yet surpressed by her gratitude and pity for her old doating uncle, Mr Richmond, whose infirmities, especially that of sight, demanded her constant care. Many years thus passed; Angela de Grey continued her labour of love, and refused every proposal to quit him, for whom alone she remained in a world she had never loved. At length Mr Richmond died, but left her still fettered, as well as Sir Eustace, by his dying wishes: and Angela's only alternative, a truly Catholic one, was, to engage her loved nuns at N——, and those also of the convent near Munich, in a Novena, or nine days' prayer, for the complete assurance of the Divine will respecting her final choice of life. During this Novena, Angela was to enter into a spiritual retreat, and, on the final day, after mass should have been said for her, the decisive reply was to be given to the offer of his hand and heart, which Sir Eustace de Grey had written on the morning after the Reformation meeting at Elverton. Whether, on that, to him, eventful morning, De Grey had experienced pain or pleasure, in the despatch of this letter, can only be conjectured, as, after parting from Mr Bernard, he proceeded on horseback to his solitary home, which was situated at an almost equal distance between the towns of Elverton and Burnleigh, the only spot now left to the descendant of those, who had been lords over all the lands around him. De Grey passed into his usual sitting-room, and, after standing for some time with his back to the fire, fixing his eyes abstractedly on the objects immediately before him, he started into some consciousness of a purpose, and of a determination to act on that purpose. He looked around for his writing materials, and, not seeing them, passed into a favourite reading closet, which he had lately fitted up as an oratory. The first object which here met his eye, was the cherished crucifix of Mr Bernard, which De Grey had missed and inquired for, in the chapel-house of the Abbey, without receiving any answer respecting its disappearance, and at the foot of which lay a note, directed to himself, containing these lines:—

"DEAR SIR EUSTACE,

"On the removal of my little possessions from the old chapel-house to this in the Abbey, I thought, during some hours, that my cherished crucifix had been stolen. On finding it afterwards where Joanna's zealous care had placed it, I became aware of having suffered too much anxiety respecting this supposed loss, and resolved to part from my treasure. *You* will value it temperately, yet devoutly. Your faithful and obliged friend in Christ,

"JOHN BERNARD."

"Oh! when shall *I* arrive at this perfect disengagement from earthly things," thought De Grey, as he reverently placed the crucifix in its destined situation, and then wrote the letter above mentioned, the answer to which was but to prepare him for that which should be sent him at the close of the Novena, and which De Grey, in this interval, endeavoured to expect with the same calm and child-like simplicity of faith with which it would be sent.

The day, which saw the Countess Angela enter on her spiritual retreat, was the same on which the weekly county paper, with its coarse insinuations, arrived at the cottage of Lady Winefride Blount. It had lain unnoticed by De Grey on the table of the reading-room at Burnleigh, until the exclamation and friendly jog of a neighbouring popish squire, roused him from the pamphlet he was reading. "Capital,—'pon my word too bad; here, Sir Eustace, here's something for you; no mistaking it. Oh! capital!" and the paper was thrust into De Grey's hand. The hope that the reply from the Countess Angela might be acceptance of his hand, was, perhaps, the first feeling which crossed the indignant mind of De Grey; the next thought was of the insult offered to Miss Carrington; and, in the hope that he might arrive at the cottage before any of its inmates should have opened this evening's paper, and county chronicle, he started up, and hurried from the reading-room, regardless of the loud laugh of his rough brother in the faith, and reached the drawing-room of his aunt just when, by the absence of the ladies at their toilet, he found it empty. A glance showed him the obnoxious paper: he seized it, and then perceived that the watchful care of Lady Winefride had cut out the paragraph of which

he was in quest. At that instant, his aunt entered, exclaiming, "Why, Eustace, I thought you expected a bachelor party at your own house to-day."

"I do," replied he, "but I came here first, to effect what I see you have already done. Thank heaven that *her* feelings have been spared."

Lady Winefride was silent. She thought it more prudent, that neither of the parties mentioned should be aware that the other had seen this public conjecture respecting them.

"There is but one step to be taken," said De Grey, striding up and down the room. "Should Angela refuse to become my wife, I must leave England."

"You must certainly leave the neighbourhood," replied his aunt.

"My former desire to enter into public life," continued he, "is only hushed, not destroyed, and it is probably not too late to accept Lord ——'s former offer of his services in the diplomacy. I can write to him on the subject by to-night's post, but, at the same time, must tell him that my final decision cannot be given till next week."

"Eustace," said his aunt, "you have hitherto so indulged me with your confidence, that I cannot help entreating to have it now."

"You shall have it," replied he, "as far as I know myself. I was, I dare not say I am, fascinated by Miss Carrington: but my heart was, in boyhood, and will again be, Angela's. She was my first love, and shall be my last, if she will trust her happiness to my keeping. So highly do I prize the treasure of her pure affections, that I would not expose myself to injure them by even a passing thought of admiration for another; and you well know, that had not these meetings of the amateur choir been irrevocably fixed, before Miss Carrington wrote to inform you of her coming, I never should have ventured to see, to listen to her again."

Lady Winefride sighed. She loved and admired Geraldine, she venerated Angela; but Eustace de Grey was the child of her adoption and affection, and she saw his happiness in peril, if not wrecked. "Do you join in this Novena?" at length she inquired.

"I do," replied De Grey; "the prayers are the 'Memorare,' and 'Salve Regina.'"

"Yes," said Lady Winefride; "I am likewise engaged in them. and pray nothing doubting but that our blessed Lady's intercession will be heard, in the choice of life which Angela is about to make. Bless you also, nay principally, my dear boy. For God's sake leave me now; for I dread your lingering here to-day on many accounts:"—and De Grey hastily took leave, and rode homewards.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"And lo! presaging Thy approach,
The heathen temples shake,
And trembling in forsaken fanes,
The fabled idols quake."

GREATLY as Geraldine enjoyed the social Catholic circle at Lady Winefride's cottage, the hour passed each day with Mr Conway was that most fraught with comfort and encouragement; and, during the ensuing week she discussed with that pious and well-instructed man all the remaining points of doubt or difficulty connected with her embrace of Catholicity. So grateful, in fact, did she feel towards him, who was thus made the means of establishing her faith, that she forgot all the little inelegancies which had at first repelled her, forgave his chuckling laugh, his snuff, and his round shoes, and watched for his visit with eagerness, which increased each day. "But how little did I think," said she to Lady Winefride, "that Mr Bernard, who first inspired me with veneration for the Catholic priesthood, should not be the one to instruct me! How often have I watched from the north windows of the Hall, that dear abbey ruin, and fancied myself going on a pilgrimage to see the holy man, and receive his counsels and his blessing. I still cherish the hope, that he may receive me into the Church. And, oh! should the time ever arrive when, in these long silent walls, I shall form, as you are doing here, a Catholic choir, I shall feel that my earthly wishes are fulfilled."

Lady Winefride smiled. "Then you are perfectly at rest, I trust, concerning our doctrines and our discipline."

"Perfectly," replied Geraldine. "Mr Conway's last instructions were on that, to me, difficult subject, the giving the communion but in one kind to the laity. He made me observe that, when our Saviour instituted the Holy Eucharist, He made it a sacrifice as well as a sacrament, ordaining the twelve apostles (who alone were present) priests, to consecrate this sacrament, and offer this sacrifice. For this latter purpose, namely, that of sacrifice, it was requisite that the victim should be mystically immolated, which was then, and is still, performed in the Mass, by the symbolical disunion, or separate consecration, of the body and the blood. It was requisite also, for the completion of the sacrifice, that the priest who had immolated the victim, by mystically separating its body and its blood, should consummate it in both these kinds: and it is to the apostles, as priests of the sacrifice, that our Lord gives the command, 'Drink ye all of this,' and not to those who communicate sacramentally. I objected that Christ, in express terms, promises, in the sixth of St John, 'to give His body and His blood to all his mystical members.' To which Mr Conway replied, 'that, by that same unfailing word, the communicant does receive, not the symbolical disunion, or separate consecration, as in the sacrifice, but the whole and entire Christ—body and blood, soul and divinity—in the sacrament. He then told me that priests and bishops (nay, even the Pope himself), unless they offer up the holy sacrifice, do not partake of both kinds: so that there is certainly no injustice to the laity in giving them under one kind the whole sacrament. Mr Conway then turned to the Scriptures. When Christ, after His resurrection, took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave it to the two disciples at Emmaus, it is clear, from the text, that He administered the holy communion under one form alone, and it is thus commented upon by Saints Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, and others. Likewise the baptized converts of Jerusalem are described as persevering in the doctrine of the apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayer, without mention of the chalice, in *Acts* ii. 42. This is also the case, at the religious meeting at Troas, on the first day of the week, to break bread. Mr Conway then turned to the first epistle to Corinthians, xi. 27, 'Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord, unworthily, shall be

guilty of the body and blood of the Lord ;' showing me how, by the alteration of this word 'or' into 'and,' the Protestant translators have altered the original text to suit their own views. Not that I could pretend to judge between the translations ; but I found, from a marginal note, that learned Protestants had conceded this small but important word. Certainly, when I recall the accounts, in ancient ecclesiastical history, of the blessed sacrament being preserved under the form of bread alone, in the oratories and private houses of the primitive Christians, for private communion, and for the viaticum in case of danger of death, the primitive belief must have been that of the Catholic Church in this day. I also remember that St Birinus, the apostle of the West Saxons, brought the sacred host into this island, in a cloth round the neck, called an orarium."

"You have also doubtless read," said Lady Winefride, "of the blessed sacrament being given, in early times, to baptized infants, in one kind only ; that it consisted of a drop out of the chalice ; and that, as late as the twelfth century, infants received under the form of wine."

"Yes," replied Geraldine ; "and Mr Conway, in explaining to me the different discipline, found requisite at different times, respecting the administration of this holy rite, reminded me of what I had also read, that Pope Gelasius required all his flock to receive under both kinds, for the purpose of detecting the secret Manichean heretics, who refused the chalice from erroneous notions ; and this change of discipline respecting the chalice, the granting it at some periods for special purposes, and withholding it at others, for fear of desecration, no longer disquiets me ; for I shall, as a Catholic, receive under one kind infinitely more than the communicant of any other community, who receives the pledge and remembrance only, while I shall receive my God !" Geraldine here paused, overcome by the intensity of her feelings. At length she said,—"I find from Mr Conway, that there was a sect, in primitive times, called the Capharnites, who were condemned as heretical by the Catholic Church, for holding exactly what is attributed to her by the Protestants in this day, namely, that the sacred elements were the suffering, not the glorified, body and blood of our Lord. Mr Everard constantly declares, that, when a Catholic and High Church Protestant discourse calmly on this point, there is little or no difference between their faith, for each believes a great mystery. But there must ever

remain this essential difference,—one Church holds, that, in consecration, a miracle takes place, the other Church denies it. Setting aside the joy, the privilege of the former belief, I also think it far better for my soul to believe in the boundless love of my God, than to doubt it. He will never punish us for too much trust in him. It is the safer side on which to be mistaken.”

That day at dinner, the party received the welcome addition of Mr Everard, who had now returned to his bachelor home at Burnleigh, somewhat testy at being put out in his plans to make every body happy in his own way, and especially annoyed at what he termed the superfine punctilio of the De Grey family, in the absence of his favourite Eustace. Towards the close of dinner, however, the old gentleman's spirits revived, and, when he joined the ladies in the evening, he was almost in good humour with every body. During a ‘tête-à-tête’ which he contrived with Geraldine, he imparted to her that Lord Hervey was hurt at not having received a reply from herself to the long letter he had sent to the Hall, particularly as she had never fulfilled her promise, respecting some controversial points on which each had something to impart.

“Lord Hervey must not be hurt at my declining to correspond with him on any topic,” replied Geraldine. “The long letter, which I received by you at Elverton, contained the point, which, could his lordship but have proved, would, according to a promise I gave him, have recalled me to Protestantism. This was, giving me evidence from Scripture, that the Reformers had a divine commission, as had the Jewish followers of our Lord, to leave the Church which had nurtured them, and to found new Churches. Now, you and my uncle would of course say, ‘Talk not of ‘leaving,’ or of ‘founding;’ these terms apply not to reforming or remodelling.’ But Lord Hervey being not High Church, but very Low Church, does talk with exultation of ‘leaving’ a ‘corrupt,’ and ‘wholly vile’ and ‘abominable thing, and treading her idolatries under foot, specifying as such the vital doctrines of the Catholic Church. However, as he cannot, after all his attacks, give me one text to prove the divine mission of the Reformers, he actually, at the close of his letter, takes his sword and buckler from the armoury of the High Church, and tells me that an express and supernatural mission is not to be expected or required of the Reformers, who were but restorers of primitive simplicity.”

"Well, but you must give him some answer," said Mr Everard.

"Then tell Lord Hervey," said Geraldine, "that, as the command to 'obey them that have the rule of you' is divine, and so explicit that the simplest child can understand it, so nothing, that is not equally divine and equally explicit, can justify the disobedience of the Reformers to their divinely-appointed rulers, and, as this counter-order cannot be found anywhere in Scripture, the original command stands in its full force against all who have dared to revolt against the Church established by God."

"I will tell him this," said Mr Everard; "but there is something else still required of you. You promised Hervey a paper of proofs that he and other Protestants, in some instances, follow tradition instead of Scripture."

"I can easily send him that paper," said Geraldine. "It was written at Sedgemoor, but it would have been ill-timed to have given it, and I afterwards mislaid and forgot it."

She then drew the paper in question from many others, theological and controversial, which had accumulated in her desk, and placed it in Mr Everard's hands.

"Scripture gives intimation of the first day being sanctified by the resurrection of our Lord, but never of its superseding and deposing the old Sabbath, which was hallowed from the creation of the world. The first precept in the Bible is, to sanctify the seventh day. This obligation is enforced by every possible injunction throughout the old law, and when Christ appears, he confirms it, by saying, 'I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil.' Yet, with all this weight of Scripture authority for keeping the Sabbath day holy, you disobey it, and follow tradition, in transferring its duties to the first day of the week, while you make this day of hitherto sacred rest, one of tenfold labour.

"Christ commands you to wash the feet of your brethren, and accompanies the command by every inducement of tenderness, of warning, and of example. Yet you disobey this plain injunction of Scripture, and follow tradition, which teaches that this command is figurative.

"Scripture gives no express warrant for the baptism of infants. On the contrary, faith is invariably stipulated for as essential, before admittance to that sacrament, and every instance of baptism throughout the New Testament, is of adults only.

Yet you follow tradition, which admits unconscious infants to the sacrament of baptism.

"You receive, and constantly repeat, the apostles' creed, for which no authority is given from Scripture, but wholly from tradition, which teaches, that these articles of faith were collected into that form during the lives of the apostles, and received their sanction."

"Well! well! I will give Hervey this paper, when next I see him," said Mr Everard. "By the bye, that 'calamity of his time,' as Camden calls the Bishop of Llandaff, that Major Tankerville, has converted Miss Scotney, whom he intends for Hervey, and is himself a good deal closeted with Lady Anne!"

"Miss Carrington!" cried Lady Winefride from the tea-table; that laugh was music to my ear. Come to our round table, and bring Mr Everard with you. He likes the first aroma of the tea, and I will indulge him."

Amongst the circle at the tea-table, was the Reverend Mr Grant, father of the young lady who had assisted, with so many scruples, at the first rehearsal of the sacred music. This gentleman, though peremptory with his daughter on the subject of popish acquaintances, yet lived on the most friendly terms himself with Lady Winefride and the Catholic priest; sent her ladyship his daily newspaper, accepted her first grapes, and was her usual partner at whist in the winter sociabilities of Burnleigh; making up to his conscience for this parleying with the enemy, by occasional yet gentle praises of the simplicity of Protestantism.

"But you Protestants require such incessant excitement, such provocatives," said Lady Winefride, in reply to a challenge of this nature. "Our old neighbour near Burnleigh, the invalid Admiral, who never ventures to dine out, from the dread of encountering unwholesome diet, often invites me to share his boiled mutton and batter-pudding: I obey the summons, and find, accordingly, the mutton and the pudding; but behold the former covered with pickles, and the latter with preserves or wine sauce. Now this is precisely the *soi-disant* simplicity of your Protestantism, which requires the constant pickle of controversy, or the preserve and wine-sauce of new interpreters and new preachers, to keep you to your barren fare, and prevent your craving after the angel's food vouchsafed to Catholics."

"Or suppose, my lady" returned the curate, "we forgive

our good Protestant admiral his little deviations in the superficial, in favour of his staunch adherence to the plain solid foundation he has beneath."

"In his mutton," rejoined Lady Winefride, laughing, "which, with a change of name, he has borrowed from us, the sheep! But a truce, good Mr Grant, while I ask Mr Everard his news from the Priory."

"I have already mentioned the most interesting part," said the old gentleman, smiling at Geraldine. "There are, however, some new guests; but they lack individuality. That Mr —, the author of 'Popery and Paganism considered and compared,' is still at the Priory: his next work ought to be, 'Protestant comforts considered and enjoyed.'"

"Mr Everard, you treat that work of Mr —'s with more indifference than I expected," said Geraldine. "Do you consider the subject as too threadbare to rouse your indignation?"

"Exactly so," replied he. "Mr — has just followed in the stupid track of earlier authors, and, as I have told him, if he and his predecessors were to follow up their reasonings with any consistency, they must be compelled to discard every token of respect, much more of adoration, to the Supreme Being. They must begin by pulling down their churches, because the heathens had temples of worship. They must renounce their belief in the Trinity, because that doctrine can be traced in the celebrated letter of Plato to Dionysius, as well as in the writings of other pagan philosophers. They must be compelled to own, that St John borrows the divinity of Christ from the Eastern school, the parallel being much stronger both in name and character between Christ and the Indian Chrishnu, than between the rites and ceremonies of pagan and Christian Rome. They must also relinquish, for the same reason (namely the incarnations of Chrishnu), their belief of salvation through the incarnation and atonement of Christ. Nay, why admit the existence of a God, the Judge and Father of all, since the pagans had their Jupiter! In short, the argument upon which Mr —, and those from whom he has borrowed, seek to condemn the belief and practice of the Catholic Church, is too hollow to bear sounding."

"You mean, I suppose," said Geraldine, "that these traits of resemblance, must necessarily be found, from the pagans having

retained, amidst all the corruptions of their polytheism, some vestiges of the truth."

"You are right," returned Mr Everard, "and if these gentlemen would be truly wise and truly learned, they would, instead of stopping short at Paganism, trace up to Jewish and Patriarchal times."

"But, Sir," interposed Mr Grant, "we object in the Protestant Church to retaining the Patriarchal, and especially the Jewish, rites, for they were but types and shadows of Christian reality."

"Well, Sir, and in as much as the Jewish rites were typical, or national, the Catholic Church retains them not. Pray do you find her continuing the 'burnt-offerings,' the 'meat-offerings,' the 'peace-offering,' the 'sin-offering,' the 'trespass-offering,' the 'ram of consecration,' and the 'scape-goat?' Do you find, in the Catholic Church, the 'feast of trumpets,' the 'feast of weeks,' the 'feast of tabernacles,' the 'feast of the passover?' These have truly passed away; but not so the use of emblems. There is a distinction between types and emblems. I say, that those parts of the Jewish service are properly retained in the Catholic Church, which are emblematical, and which were ordained by the Almighty, as a homage to His majesty, and glory to be rendered to Him by His Church for ever. Well, Sir."

"You must give me a little time, Mr Everard, to settle my thoughts. You always rush on at such a prodigious rate, that quiet folks cannot follow you. I will think over all this in my study;" replied Mr Grant.

"Well, Sir, well! and in the mean time, I will indulge myself, if not you, by reading, (with Lady Winefride's permission), a page or two from a pamphlet sent me last week, the production of a deeper brain than that which produced the 'Paganism and Popery considered.' It is, in fact, a reply to this letter, and I own that I have borrowed from its pages several of the arguments which I have just been urging." Here Mr Everard drew forth the little pamphlet and began: "'You imagine that little or no change has taken place in the Pantheon, by the substitution of all the saints in it for all the gods' 'I will suppose, if you please, an ancient Roman revisiting that temple the first thing which would strike him, would be the sign of salvation—the image of Christ crucified, raised upon every altar—and most conspicuously upon the principal and central one.

On the right, the picture of one whom men are stoning, while he, with eyes uplifted, prays for their conversion, would rivet his attention ; and on the left, the modest statue of a virgin, with an infant in her arms, would invite him to inquiry. Then he would see monuments of men, whose clasped or crossed hands, express how they expired in the prayer of hope Around him he would see, at whatever hour of the day he might enter, solitary worshippers, who gently come in through the ever-un-closed brazen portals, to keep watch, like the lamp which sheds its mild light upon them, before the altar of God. And I fancy it would be no difficult task, with these objects before us, to expound and fully develope to him the Christian faith ; the life of our Redeemer, beginning with His birth from a virgin, to His death upon a cross ; the testimony to His doctrine, and the power which accompanied it, exhibited in the triumph of the first among His martyrs ; the humble and modest virtue His teaching inspired to his followers, their contempt of worldly praise, and the fixing of their hopes upon a better world ; the constant and daily influence His religion exercises among its believers, whom it sweetly invites and draws to breathe a solitary prayer amidst the turmoils of a busy life. And methinks this ancient heathen would have an idea of a religion immensely different from that which he had professed : the religion of the meek and of the humble, of the persecuted and the modest, of the devout and the chaste. I believe too, that by seeing the substitution of symbol for symbol,—of the cross, the badge of ignominy, with its un-resisting victim, for the haughty Thunderer,—of the chastest of virgins for the lascivious Venus,—of the forgiving Stephen for the avenging god of war,—he would thereby conceive a livelier idea of the overthrow of his idolatry by the mildest of doctrines, of the substitution of Christianity for heathenism, than if the temple had been merely stripped and left a naked hall, or a tottering ruin.

“ ‘ After having thus allowed the heathen to discover, if he could, his ancient worship and morality in the very Roman church which you have chosen, and explained to him the doctrines there taught, I would bring him to the only splendid temple in this country, wherein the Catholic religion has never been exercised, and where alone it has left no vestiges of its truths and practices. I would bring him, after duly paying his entrance fee, into the Cathedral of St Paul’s, and desire him to *guess* the religion to

which it belenged. Would not his first question be, does it belong to *any* religion? Is it a place of worship at all? No altar, no chapel, no emblem of any holy thought is visible; no point towards which men turn, as strongly concentrating the divine presence; no emblem of a peculiar dedication; not a worshipper, not a reverential spectator: not one who, as he crosses the threshold, prepares his soul, as if approaching God, in prayer. There he sees men, with their heads covered as if in the public streets, walking to and fro, looking at the edifice only as at an architectural wonder, cut off by a stockade from the great nave, because so little respect is paid to it, that, if open, it would be profaned without scruple; while the jibe and the joke, or the state of the funds, or the scandal of the day, alone divide, with their well-taxed curiosity, the conversation of the various groups. Would he, so far, see anything to show him that he stood in a place for *Christian* worship?... But while he thus felt himself at a loss to discover what religion claimed the possession of this temple, I would direct his attention another way, and bid him look among the tombs and costly monuments which surround him, for some intimation of what God is here worshipped, and what virtues taught. There he sees emblems indeed in sufficient number,—not the cross, or the dove, or the olive branch, as on the ancient tomb, but the drum and the trumpet, the boarding-pike and the cannon. Who are they whose attitudes and actions are deemed the fit ornaments for the religious temple? Men, rushing forward with sword in hand, to animate their followers to the breach, or falling down while boarding the enemy's deck; heroes, if you choose, benefactors to their country, but surely not the illustrators of religion. Of one it is said, that he died as a Roman would certainly have wished him, after having grappled with his enemy's ship, and rendered the destruction of one or both secure; the epitaph of another is expressed in the words of his commander's despatch; that of a third, in the vote of the House of Commons; not a word of a single Christian virtue, of a thought for God, of a hope of heaven; not a hint that one professed or believed in any religion. And would not the heathen rejoice to have found a temple, where the courage of the three hundred Fabii, or the self-devotion of the Decii, or the virtues of the Scipios, were so plainly taught, and held up to the practical admiration and imitation of men?

“ ‘ And how would his delight increase, on more closely inspecting the emblems under which these virtues, or their circumstances, are expressed. Sea and river gods, with their oozy crowns and outpouring vases; the Ganges, with his fish and calabash; the Thames, with the *genii* of his confluent streams; and the Nile, with his idol the *sphinx*; *Victory*, winged and girt up as of old, placing earthly laurel on the brows of the falling; *Fame*, with its ancient trumpet, blasting forth their worldly merits; *Clio*, the offspring of *Apollo*, recording their history; and, besides these, new creations of gods and goddesses, *Rebellion* and *Fraud*, *Valour* and *Sensibility*; *Britannia*, the very copy of his own worshipped *Roma*; and some of these, too, with an unseemly lack of drapery, more becoming an ancient than a modern temple. This assemblage of ancient deities, as the only symbols to instruct his eye, would assuredly go far to confirm him, either that his ancient religion, its emblems, and its morality, had never been supplanted, or had lately been restored. Little would it boot to explain to him, how behind that screen a sacred book was read to a few people once a week,—to empty benches every day,—which teaches man to abhor his idolatry, and worship God in spirit: and that learned men there preach homilies on the peril of idolatry, and the danger of admitting even symbols into worship. All this would, I think, but perplex him the more. If you are not permitted to make any images, or to have them in your temple, he would ask, why break the law only in favour of warriors and river gods? If you are allowed, why are the Christians at Rome to be denounced and anathematized for erecting those of Christ and his saints? And truly, I have no hesitation in saying, that if he reasoned as you have done, and followed your principles of judgment; if he pronounced upon religion by the shell, and not by the kernel, by the body, not by the soul, by the outward forms, not by the belief which they express; and if he persisted, like you, in giving credit to his own impressions and preconceived judgments, rather than to the protestations and declarations of those with whom he deals, I have no hesitation in saying, that he would see a much fainter impress of Christian thought in the Protestant than in the Catholic temple; much greater memorials of proscribed idolatry in the English than in the Roman cathedral.”*

* See the Rev. Dr Wiseman's Pamphlet in reply to Mr Poynder.

"Come, parson!" cried Mr Everard, as he closed the pamphlet, "what say you to this?"

The good-tempered curate smiled, and at length said; "I will tell you what I think of it all the next time I visit St Paul's, on condition that you, Mr Everard, will, in the mean time, set a better example than you have done of late in Burnleigh, by coming regularly to the parish church, where we have neither gods nor goddesses in lieu of the saints."

"But the images of the lion and unicorn are over the chancel," replied Mr Everard, "which scare my scrupulous conscience; and there are ram's horns on my very pew door, butting furiously against my Protestant principles."

"Your Protestant principles," repeated Mr Grant, shaking his head, but yet unable to help laughing: "I fear, sir, that the chief business of your life has been to undermine them."

"Well! well! it is getting late," said the old gentleman starting up: "let us leave these fair ladies to their pillows, and walk to our homes together."

CHAPTER XIX.

Come then, since now in safety we have past
Thro' error's rocks, and see the port at last,
Let us review and recollect the whole.

Jenny.

SINCE the arrival of Mrs Kelsoe with her young lady at Burnleigh, she had strictly adhered to the promise exacted of her, that she would not comment upon any thing she might either see or hear, until she should be invited to express her sentiments. During the first week, Geraldine had rejoiced at this precaution, when, by the compressed lips and extended nostrils of her attendant, she perceived the in-dwelling of "no popery," in all its turbulence. The following week the features were more at peace, and though Mrs Kelsoe still sighed, yet on Geraldine's inquiry of, "I hope you are comfortable, Kelsoe," the reply was, "Every body does their best, ma'am, to make me so:" and this indica-

tion of softened feelings encouraged Geraldine, after a few more days had passed, to break through the reserve between herself and her faithful maid, by inquiring—"whether the Catholic religion did not appear to Mrs Kelsoe in a fairer point of view, than when seen in the distance?" and the good woman, highly pleased at this renewal of confidence, immediately responded with, "Indeed, Miss Carrington, I cannot say but what it does. To be sure, some of the goings on are strange enough; but Mrs Watson and Joseph have always a reason to give for every thing; and I must say, I had no notion that the common Catholics were so well instructed."

"I suppose that, just at first, you were distressed to see so many sacred pictures and crucifixes about the house," said Geraldine.

"No, ma'am, I was cured of that very soon: but no thanks to any one here in that respect. I came to a right understanding on that point entirely by my own good sense and reflection."

"Indeed!" said Geraldine, smiling; "how was this?"

"Why, Miss Carrington, when I saw the figure of our Saviour dying on the cross, in my little room here, I was startled: but somehow, when I came to go to bed at night, I was pleased to have it there alone with me; and I thought to myself, when my young lady put up the likeness of the dear honoured General in the tenant's hall, as a remembrance for us all, we none of us thought it was breaking the commandment, though it was his image; and, when we drank the General's health, and turned to his bust, we all knew what we were about; and so then I thought, if I like to look at the likeness of my absent earthly master, why should I not like to look at the likeness of my absent heavenly Master?—that's how I reasoned, ma'am."

"You reasoned very sensibly," said Geraldine; "I should like to hear some more of your reasonings."

"Why, I can't say," continued Mrs Kelsoe, "that I found out any thing more, quite by myself; but I have no objections now to their making the sign of the cross."

"Have you not," said Geraldine, really surprised; "how is this?"

"Why, ma'am, to be sure, the first two or three days it did put me in a fine fluster, and at last I said, 'Dear me, Joseph,' says I, 'if you are thankful to God for your meals, can't you raise up your heart, without all that twisting and twirling of your

fingers? where's the religion of all that dumb show?"—"Mrs Kelsoe," said he, "the early Christians made that sign of the Cross, not only in remembrance of our blessed Saviour's dying for them and for us, but also to show that they were Christians, in the midst of Pagans and Jews, even though they died for it."—"Well, but I am as good a Christian as yourself," says I, "so you need not be flourishing away before me; I should not make a martyr of you." "But," says he, "though I have no chance of dying for the cross, I have a great chance of being laughed at for it, and that's very difficult to bear, and a good exercise for a Christian. You know we are told not to be ashamed 'of the cross.' 'Don't trouble yourself to quote Scripture to me,' said I, 'for I know the whole Bible by heart, and you Catholics know nothing about it.' 'I've got a Bible,' said he. 'Have you,' said I; 'well, I won't betray you.' 'Betray me?" says he; 'why Mr Conway gave it me.' 'Oh, then,' said I, 'it's not the real Bible.' But Joseph fetched it, and sure enough it's the real whole Bible. Think of that, ma'am!"

"I can tell you, besides this," said Geraldine, "that I still, and shall ever, retain my Protestant Bible, with the consent of Mr Conway, because it was my beloved mother's gift. But continue your histories, for they greatly amuse me. Do you find Joseph the best informed among the servants?"

"Not better than Mrs Watson, ma'am. She is very cool and composed in her answers (for she never begins); and then she is so kind-hearted, good soul! She found me in a terrible way, one night, with crying, and would have the reason; so at last out it came, that you, Miss Carrington, would soon be taught to dislike me, and to think it your duty to believe that I should be d—d; and," said I, "how can I help myself? I believe just what I was told as a child: and no more and no less can I ever believe; for old people can't take to new things." "But," says Mrs Watson, "your young lady will be taught no such thing; for," says she, "you are no *heretic*, Mrs Kelsoe, for Mr Conway says that the guilt of heresy consists in an obstinate and wilful adherence to a religion that is false, and this is very different from you, who, at all events, are desirous to know the truth, and, I have no doubt, would gladly embrace it if you had discovered it." Then she said that Protestants very much misunderstood the feeling of Catholics towards them; that Catholics were sorry for Protestants, but that they would not dare to

condemn any one. All this is wonderful, is it not, ma'am? so different from what I have been told—but then there are many things still that put me into such a rage. I can scarcely wait to have an explanation."

"But this does not accord with the 'good sense,' on which you pique yourself," replied Geraldine. "You should exert sufficient self-control to listen first, and condemn afterwards."

"Oh, ma'am, but those saints, and relics, and miracles; how is it, Miss Carrington, that, with your fine and expensive education——!"

"My dear Kelsoe," interrupted Geraldine, laughing, as she received her gloves and handkerchief from the irascible tire-woman, and hastened to obey the summons to dinner, "I am delighted to hear the result of your skirmishes with Joseph and Mrs Watson; but I resign you entirely to them, and have no doubt of your finding their explanations perfectly satisfactory."

The dinner party was joined by the Reverend Mr Grant, who had been invited every day by Lady Winefride, until his daughter, who was then absent, should return to him. Mr Everard also had dropped in, as a matter of course; but it was not till the evening that Mr Conway could find an hour's leisure from his arduous duties, when he entered the drawing-room at the cottage, just in time to bear company with Mr Everard in the latter's eighth cup of tea. The party were unanimous in their greeting of the benevolent and joyous pastor, and the conversation took a lively and humorous turn, which Geraldine felt most beneficial to her spirits. Mr Conway, far from damping, greatly contributed to, the innocent mirth of the party, and it was not until the conversation had insensibly taken a graver and deeper turn, that he said to Lady Winefride, "I have brought something in my hand, which I think will interest all your ladyship's guests, and which I know you will not object to seeing again. This is my yearly present from the baker at L——, to whom I formerly rendered some services. He is a Jew; and reminds me of his friendship, by sending me, every year, before Easter, which is, you know, his Passover, a 'cake of unleavened bread.'"

All were, indeed, interested, and the Passover cake was carefully examined, and passed from one to the other round the table.

"It reminds me of the Scotch oat cake," said one, "it is so thin."

Geraldine took the unleavened bread in her turn, and gazed on it with emotion mixed with awe. Every particular, relating to that commemorative, yet typical, feast of the Passover, was so familiar to her from her early study of Bible history, yet so far apart from all things present or personal, that, when she saw and touched this paschal bread, she almost fancied herself standing at midnight, staff in hand, to partake in haste of the lamb without blemish, and the bitter herbs, while blood was sprinkled on the door-posts and lintel of the house, in token of the "Lord's Passover." At length, she remembered that Mr Grant had not closely examined the unleavened cake, and as she gave it into his hands, he gratified her by showing and expressing much of the same train of feeling, which had been hers, and conversed for some time with her on the institution of this feast, which, as he justly said, though highly interesting in its commemoration, was far more so in its typical character."

"Yes," said Mr Conway, "when we pass on to that Last Supper, when the Divine Antitype took that paschal bread, and broke it, we look on its very form and matter as consecrated by His adorable hands."

"Do you mean," said Mr Grant, "that you copy the matter and form of the Passover cake in your sacramental bread? I own that, when some one said that it resembled the oat cake of Scotland, I was much more struck by its resemblance to the Roman Catholic host; but I did not know that you intended this resemblance, and therefore I did not mention it."

"Yes, we use the unleavened bread at the sacrifice of the mass," replied Mr Conway, "although this is a circumstance of pure discipline, which does not touch the essence of the Eucharist. With respect to the form of the host, we are guided by the beautiful allusion to the Eucharist in the Apocalypse, an allusion which can be understood only by the believers in a miraculous change in the bread."

"But yet," said Mr Grant, "I have a fine engraving of the Last Supper from a Catholic original, in which the bread is quite in a Protestant form."

"Yes," rejoined Mr Conway, "copies of Carlo Dolce's beautiful, but ignorant, painting are dispersed over England."

"But who expects accuracy from Italian painters," said Mr

Everard, "with their chronological impossibilities, and their inaccuracies of all kinds? Carlo Dolce has copied the peasants' roll of the country, which mistake has passed current with all those as ignorant as himself, though not so excusably so; for what could he know of the Jewish Passover, and of the unleavened bread?"

"I must express my regret," said the Protestant curate to the Catholic priest, "for having misjudged you on this point. I thought, with many others, that your Church had invented this peculiar form for the sacramental bread, on purpose to give (what shall I call it?) a more supernatural appearance to the eyes of the people; that their senses might be the more easily deceived, and the miracle of transubstantiation more easily credited."

"Tell us, Mr Conway, from what part of the Apocalypse you find directions for the peculiar form of the Catholic Host," said Geraldine.

"From the second chapter, seventeenth verse," replied Mr Conway, "where Christ thus promises,—'To him that overcometh I will give the hidden manna; and I will give him a white counter (in the Protestant version rendered stone), and on the counter a new name written, which no man knoweth but he who receiveth it.' You, being a classical scholar, Mr Grant, are of course aware, that, amongst the ancient Greeks, it was the custom to vote, on public occasions, with white or black pebbles, gathered from the sea shore, or banks of rivers; and that, in process of time, and at the period of St John's vision, these stones were superseded by small circular pieces of wood or ivory, like our modern counters; upon which *the name* of the candidate was inscribed. Now, according to the doctrine of our Church, to the communicant is given, in the blessed Eucharist, the body and blood of Jesus Christ; this is the 'hidden manna,' under the appearance of bread and wine. And in the sacramental host, is he given a white counter; and in the initials of the 'Saviour of mankind,' stamped on every host, is he given that 'new name written, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth.' This interpretation is full of meaning, when the Catholic faith on this awful question is considered: but if, in the sacrament, there were nothing but bread, how could the Christian's 'hidden manna' be there? If Jesus Christ be not

truly imparted, how can that new name remain unknown to all, save to him who receives in faith the living bread that comes down from heaven?"

"This is very striking," said Geraldine; "I have never yet understood any Protestant explanation of that passage: this is perfectly comprehensible."

"I believe," said Mr Grant, "that you take other passages of the Revelations to guide, or at any rate to authorize, part of your worship; but is not this visionary and hazardous, Mr Conway?"

"Catholic commentators," replied Mr Conway, "suppose that the Evangelist, in his book of the Apocalypse, adopted the imagery, with which he represents his mystic revelations, from the ceremonies observed by the early Christian Church, in offering up the Mass, or Eucharistic sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. Therefore, we follow the description he gives us, in the opening of the eighth chapter, in the service of our altars: 'And another angel came, and stood before the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God.'—'And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, from the hand of the angel.'"

"You profess to follow Scripture, Mr Conway," said Mr Grant, "and yet you daily offer up the sacrifice of the Mass. Now, you will really oblige me, by telling me what interpretation your Church can possibly give to the twenty-seventh verse of the seventh chapter of the Hebrews? The apostle, after comparisons between the priesthood of Aaron and that of Melchisedec, continues thus speaking of Christ, our high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:—'Who needeth not *daily*, as those high priests, to offer up *sacrifice*, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once, when he offered up himself.'"

"My good, sir," replied Mr Conway, "we truly hold that the 'one sacrifice of himself once offered cannot be repeated.' Christ can suffer no more. But the mystical immolation of the altar, the 'unbloody sacrifice,' as prophesied by Malachi, in the first chapter and the eleventh verse, must continue to the end of time. 'For from the rising of the sun, even to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in

every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering.' You will doubtless say that this 'pure offering' means that of a contrite and grateful heart. But just recall the tenth verse of the thirteenth chapter of Hebrews, where St Paul says, 'We have an 'altar,' whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle.' St Paul, in addressing the Hebrews, who never employed an altar but for sacrifice, would not have used that term but to denote the Christian sacrifice of the altar—the pure offering; and this acceptance of the Apostle's meaning has been shared by some of the brightest lights of the Protestant Church, who have contended, from this mention of the Christian altar, that the commemorative feast of the body and blood of Jesus Christ was a sacrifice, as well as a sacrament. And now, in seeking to reconcile you to the literal meaning of the Apostle's words, and to the real sacrifice, let me freely admit the figurative meaning—the spiritual sacrifice of a humble and contrite heart, which God will not despise."

"I hope," said Mr Grant, "that you do not take my objections and inquiries amiss; for I do not mean them offensively. Tell me then, Mr Conway, how you get over the eighteenth verse of the second chapter of Colossians,—'Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his own fleshly mind, and not holding the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.'"

As Mr Grant quoted these verses, Geraldine turned with great interest to Mr Conway, for they had appeared to her also to condemn the Catholic invocation of guardian angels, and she had intended to ask for their explanation in her next conference with her Catholic instructor.

"Your Protestant version," replied Mr Conway, "renders it, 'the worshipping of angels': our Catholic version is, 'the religion of angels,' which is more explanatory of the doctrine or those early heretics, to which these verses apply. These heretics were the followers of Simon Magus, and Menander, who believed that angels and demons were the makers and lords of this lower world, and, as such, offered sacrifice to them. They also believed the angels to be the carriers of intelligence between man and the Almighty; but with this vital difference between

their belief and that of Catholics, that these heretics set aside the mediation of Christ, who is the head of angels and of men, while no one praying in the spirit of the Catholic Church, ever begged his good angel's prayer to God through him, but through Jesus Christ, our divine head."

"And now," said Mr Grant, "I call on you, my dear sir, to justify your Church, if you can, for making a distinction between mortal and venial sins, as if all sin were not hateful to God, and deadly to the soul? How can there be such a thing as a small sin? The very term is a contradiction."

"So thought Mr Harley, our new convert," replied Mr Conway, "before the fatal accident which befell his child; that fine little boy who was drowned last year. Till then I had never held any intercourse with the parents: but you must remember I was then sent for."

"Yes, you were then sent for," said Mr Grant, "and my pastoral services were declined. I remember the circumstance well, with all its painful consequences."

"The messenger informed me," continued Mr Conway, "of the death of the child, but I could not conjecture the parent's motive in sending for the Catholic priest, instead of the Protestant curate, till, on my arrival, Mr Harley seized my arm, and dragging me to the room where lay the lifeless body of his child, gasped out these words; 'There, sir! there is my only child. I early taught him to know his God; his heart was full of piety and truth, but he has died in sin: say! is he damned throughout an endless eternity?'

"I felt inexpressibly shocked. I could only entreat to be told the details of this calamity. They were these: the poor child had been tempted to take some sweetmeats, and when charged with the fact, denied it. Not being, however, an habitual liar, his blushes betrayed him, and his mother, greatly pained at this adding sin to sin, sent him from her presence, telling him, that as she could no longer trust or respect him, he must not approach her or his father the rest of the day. The boy was sent away more abashed than penitent, and his poor mother saw him no more till his spirit had fled. He had wandered into the garden, at a time when he was usually occupied by his lessons; the gardener had therefore omitted the usual precaution with a reservoir of deep water; and before the search began for the missing child, life was extinct"

"How dreadful!" exclaimed the listeners to this tale of woe: "the poor mother!"

"Oh, the poor mother!" cried Mr Conway, "such a scene of heart-rending anguish I rarely witnessed: the child having been in disgrace, and dying before being forgiven, this rested on her tender heart. She could not pardon herself, for having been, as she then thought, too severe; but the father's was the deeper woe. Thank God! I was able to comfort both. After some conversation on the necessarily doubtful question, of whether the poor child had repented of his twofold guilt, Mr Harley entreated me to give him an exact account of the Catholic doctrine, on mortal and venial sin; 'for,' said he, 'the Protestant belief that my child is at once an angel in glory, coupled with the contradictory belief, that the smallest sin is damnable, throws my mind into inextricable confusion.' I then told him, that the Catholic belief in a distinction between mortal and venial sins, was founded on the written word of God, where we are told, that even the just man falls seven times a day, and that 'men must give an account of every idle word that they speak. We also know, that there is not an instant of our life in which it may not suddenly terminate, without the possibility of our calling upon God for mercy. What, then, will become of the soul, which is thus surprised? We are shown by Scripture, that nothing defiled shall enter heaven; and will, then, our just and merciful God make no distinction in guiltiness, as rigid Protestants maintain? Will he condemn to the same eternal punishment, the poor child who has died under the guilt of a lie of excuse, and the abandoned wretch who has murdered his father? To say that he will, is so monstrous a doctrine in itself, and so contrary to Scripture, which declares that God 'will render to every man according to his deeds,' that it ought to be universally exploded.* Scripture makes a distinction between the degrees of sin, and so does the Church; and Protestants, in attempting to be wiser, lose themselves in endless contradiction and confusion. What means the distinction between the 'gnat and the camel,' between the 'mote and the beam,' but venial and mortal sin, or, in other words, faults and crimes."

"Mr Conway," said Lady Winefride, "I am aware that our good friend, Mr Grant, has one more weighty thing on his mind, about which he has attacked me once or twice. This is,

* See Milner's "End of Controversy."

the omission, by the Catholic Church, of one of the commandments, for the better furtherance of image worship. Are not those the proper terms, Mr Grant?"

"Why, certainly, Lady Winefride, since you challenge me to speak plainly, I must say, that to expunge the second commandment from the Decalogue, is such sacrilege, that my personal respect for Mr Conway can alone induce me to listen to any palliatives or excuses for it."

"But suppose that, in lieu of palliative or excuse," said Mr Conway, "I boldly deny the fact?"

"But you cannot, surely, venture so far," said Mr Grant. "I know that you have still the appearance of ten commandments, because you have divided the last to make up the number; but you cannot account for the omission of the second commandment."

"Are you a Hebrew scholar, Mr Grant?" said Mr Conway.

"No, Sir: I once knew a little of Hebrew, but of late years I have neglected that interesting study for those more applicable to my parish duties."

"But still you must be aware that, in the original chapter of Exodus, there is no division into verses. Nothing, in fact, to mark the line of distinction between the commands, except the spirit and the sense. St Jerome and St Augustine made a different division. The former separated the command respecting the worship due to God, into two parts; the latter conceived the concluding part of the injunction to be (as in the one relating to the Sabbath) an explanation of the preceding, and to form but one commandment; while in the command, 'Thou shalt not covet,' he deemed that a distinction should be made between the 'wife,' and the more worldly goods. This division of the Ten Commandments by St Augustine, was adopted by the Church, and has continued to this day; while Protestants have preferred and adopted the division of St Jerome. For this preference we Catholics reproach you not, for we hold that the spirit of the Commandments is of far more consequence than any line of demarcation."

"Most true," cried Mr Grant. "I was not aware that our second commandment was incorporated with your first."

"But, my good Sir," observed Mr Conway, smiling, "pardon me for saying, that, when persons attack the honour and in-

tegrity of others, they ought to be aware of every motive and of every fact."

"Certainly," said Mr Grant; "but, Sir, I do judge by fact, and not by hearsay. One of the little books of your school fell into my hands, and, owing to this division of the Commandments, the second of them was actually omitted, Mr Conway: for the heads only of the commands were given, in this way, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain;' 'Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day;' 'Honour thy father and thy mother;' and so on."

"Yes!" said Mr Conway, "you have seen one of the infants' catechisms, in which everything is simplified and abridged. I will now have the pleasure of sending you the standard catechism, used throughout the elder classes of the Catholic schools, in which you will find every commandment at full length, with the divisions of St Augustine: and when you receive this catechism, Mr Grant, perhaps you will reflect, that this division was made by the very one among the ancient fathers, whom your Church delights to claim, and that this rule having been adopted several centuries before that Church existed, its members should pause before they attack this division, as some new and crafty device of papists: they should reflect, that, whether St Jerome or St Augustine were correct, the difference is not one of faith; that the spirit of the Decalogue remains the same, and calls aloud to the Protestant, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.'"

"The constant misapprehension of Protestants," said Lady Winefride, "excites one's continued pity and surprise. A very intelligent and well-informed lady of my acquaintance, accompanied me to mass a few Sundays since, and afterwards expressed her great regret that, in the Nicene Creed, which is retained word for word in her Church, we Catholics should all have knelt at the words, 'born of the Virgin Mary.' I observed that she might have perceived the greater number prepare to kneel at the previous sentence, 'And was incarnate of the Holy Ghost,' and showed her the Missal, by which she perceived that the congregation had moved at the above words only that they might be all on their knees when those were said which she saw printed in capitals, 'AND WAS MADE MAN;' while any remaining doubt was removed by this note: 'Here all kneel, to adore the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation.'"

CHAPTER XX.

In meekness and in love she stood,
A thing of mortal care,
But pure and strong is womanhood
In faithfulness and prayer.

Stebbing

THE Countess Angela had now finished her retreat, and, with it the nine days' prayer, when, with her meek eyes filled with grateful happy tears, she laid the letter to her cousin Eustace on the table before the reverend mother, to take its turn with others. These others, however, were necessarily to be read by the superior, while that of the Countess was submitted only from a feeling of deep love and respect towards her, whom she considered as her first earthly friend. The venerable lady smiled as she perused it, but as she closed it, said, "I could not alter a line. Bless you, my sweet enthusiast!" and the letter was despatched. Two days more and De Grey was master of its contents; but a week elapsed before he was again on the road to Burnleigh. The weather, during that past week, had been unseasonably hot and damp; the soft and incessant rain had confined every one to the house; and Geraldine, who had felt every mental disquietude increased by physical ailment, hailed with thankfulness a violent thunder storm, which at length relieved the atmosphere. Well defended against the now bracing air, she escaped alone from the cottage, and sought, as the driest walk, a gravel terrace which overlooked the winding and picturesque road from Elverton to Burnleigh. That road also led from De Grey's dwelling, and it was not without an expectation of seeing either a messenger or himself pass into Burnleigh, that Geraldine cast an inquiring eye towards the spot whence a horseman could first be seen, when, just as she turned from her post of observation, De Grey stood before her.

"Pardon me, Miss Carrington," said he, observing her start and colour, "I ought to feel as a culprit intruding thus upon your solitude; but, after some hours' conversation with my aunt, I have left her, to seek you, and bid you personally farewell, before leaving England for—America.....

"America!" repeated Geraldine, much surprised.

"Yes, America. We, novices, in the diplomacy, cannot choose where to go, or what post to fill. I am offered, by the present minister of the Colonies, the secretaryship to Mr —, and my acceptance, after some days' hesitation, was given..... yesterday."

"Leave England!" thought Geraldine, "accept a diplomatic post abroad for an indefinite period. The Countess Angela then follows her vocation; but does this decision affect him so very deeply? I have sometimes thought otherwise—or have those vile calumnies driven him to this step?"

At length De Grey spoke, in the slow calm tone of one who has endured much, and has resolved to endure more. "Angela has decided," said he, "according to the dictates of her conscience, and will find perfect peace. The letter which informed me of this, I have answered in person. We have parted, and with less emotion than I now feel in the remembrance." De Grey here paused, and Geraldine, finding it impossible to speak, waited till he should have recovered his self-command. "Angela's continuance at N—— Convent," continued he, "will, of course, be a thing of notoriety. Evil tongues will not be silent. Few will believe that one so fitted to adorn the world would have left it, but through some bitter disappointment; and already have I heard that I am the one to drive her there, by my preference for another. Angela has chosen a retreat, where, if these cruel calumnies reach her, they will affect her not. But there is another being—one left exposed to the cold slanderous world, whom my present state of liberty would still farther injure. For her alone I leave England."

"Sir Eustace," replied Geraldine, whose heart responded to this frank and generous avowal, "I am aware that my change of religion has been attributed to motives and feelings unworthy of me, and whatever shafts may yet be hurled at the wounded deer I am prepared to bear them. Still, when I reflect on the dishonour done to religion by even the appearance of evil on the part of its professors, I ought not perhaps to bear this farther stigma, that I, or rather my paltry acres, have severed two fond hearts. I accept, therefore, the cruel kindness you offer me of your banishment from England. Your absence, also, will make the task to the Countess Angela a more easy one, if indeed she be resolved upon this final step"

"I should never attempt to change her resolution," said De Grey; "for if I could not form her happiness, she never could form mine. And now, Miss Carrington, farewell! May your noble courage in tribulation be rewarded by the bright sunshine you so richly deserve. I shall hear of you, and unless," added he with a faint smile, "you also should retire to a cloister, I shall perhaps one day see you again."

"Stay," said Geraldine, "let me thank you before you go, for all your disinterested kindness towards me, and for the books and instruction you have given me, and for the introduction to this valued friend whose grateful guest I am. If, by the command of my father, I am to be parted from her and my other Catholic friends, they will, I trust, pray for me—indeed at all events I need prayers," added she, the tears, in spite of her utmost efforts, rushing to her eyes.

"Now Heaven preserve my courage and honour against those tears," silently prayed De Grey. "You have, and will ever have, the prayers of your Catholic friends, Miss Carrington; and rest assured that, not only in the little Chapel of Burnleigh, but on the other side of the Atlantic, those prayers will continue with unabated fervour. Pray likewise, on your part, for one of those Catholic friends—once more farewell! Almighty God, protect, comfort, and bless you!"

"There is then one mind and one heart that can fully understand mine," thought Geraldine, as she watched De Grey's retreating figure through the leafless shrubs, "and I, thank Heaven, can understand the honour and the delicacy of his! Countess Angela, yours must be indeed a true vocation!" Geraldine's next thoughts were devoted to Lady Winefride, at whose door, on re-entering the house, she remained for some instants, without venturing to knock, and when at length she did so repeatedly, she received no answer. "Then she must be in the Chapel," thought our heroine, and passing immediately into the tribune from her own room, it was there she found her friend. After remaining a short time longer in prayer, Lady Winefride retired from the tribune, beckoning Geraldine to follow her back into her apartment. Directly they had shut the outer door, and were secure from observation, Geraldine threw herself into Lady Winefride's arms, exclaiming, "Dearest friend, I feel that you forgive me for being the innocent cause of your bereavement; but oh! how wretched does it make me to cause your sorrow."

Lady Winefride pressed her closely to her bosom, and wept ; then rousing herself, she said, " Do you not think it would do us both good to pass a few days at N—— Convent, before Angela takes the habit ?"

" Oh ! it will be the only thing that can interest me," cried Geraldine ; ' how delightful, how soothing ! But you, Lady Winefride, will it be all this to you ?"

" Yes," replied her Ladyship, " a visit to N—— will recruit my spirits, as it always does ; and the happiness of Angela will raise my thoughts from this grief of earthly parting. We shall be set at liberty from guests and other engagements after next Tuesday, the feast of the Epiphany, and I will write to beg an invitation from Reverend Mother, before the post leaves Burnleigh to-night."

This arrangement was now the engrossing subject of Geraldine's thoughts. To visit a convent would have been great pleasure and excitement, but to be an inmate, during some days, within its walls of enclosure, was perfect delight. She should then also behold and converse with the woman whom Eustace de Grey had loved—the woman who had had the courage to reject him, for this wondrous, this mysterious life of a nun. All the Protestant romances she had ever read, and could remember, were again thought over. Horrors, equivalent to the late inventions from America, rose to her mind, but it was now no easy task to terrify Geraldine respecting the hidden wickedness of anything Catholic ; and when, on the day appointed for their reception at N——, they stopped, after three days' easy travelling, at the lodge gates of the avenue leading to the Convent, her heart glowed with the same awe and delight, as if she had expected an interview with some of the " just made perfect." The Convent was a low red building, standing in extensive pleasure grounds. A double range of octagon bay windows ran along the south front of the Convent ; and in the same aspect, but nearly hidden by a screen of trees and shrubs, was the line of building forming the dormitories and cells of the nuns. Isolated as was this Convent, with its avenue of two miles, and its woods and fields around it, there were no walls of enclosure and no gratings—a mitigation of conventual strictness which might have disappointed our heroine, had she not overlooked it, in the realization of her expectations in other respects. At a small side-door the carriage had stopped, and a tall pale graceful portress the very ' beau ideal' of a faded

nun, appeared, and with smiling courtesy welcomed the travellers into a little room immediately adjoining the entrance, called the "new parlour," where she left her guests, in order to inform the Mother Prioress, and the Countess Angela, of their arrival. Geraldine trembled with nervous excitement, and asked Lady Winefride, who was tranquilly warming herself by the fire, whether, as there were no candles or lamps, she might not raise a brighter blaze by which to see the nuns. This was scarcely achieved, when a little figure, gliding into the room, was folded in Lady Winefride's arms, and, after a long embrace, it was Geraldine's turn to be greeted by Angela de Grey. The cherub notes, which Lady Winefride had once spoken of, were recalled to Geraldine, as she at length listened to this vision of her imagination. She could scarcely reply to all the kindness which flowed from the lips of this seemingly ethereal being, and found it more easy to receive the welcome from the Reverend Mother, who now entered the room, and whose dignity, sweetness, and humility, at once gained Geraldine's confidence and esteem. After some interesting conversation between the Reverend Mother and Lady Winefride, relative to the choice which the Countess Angela had made, during which Geraldine felt much flattered to be thus treated as a friend, Sister Gertrude, the same nun who had received them at their arrival, came to inform the Mother Prioress that a party, who had been visiting at the Convent, was on the point of departure, and wished to pay their parting thanks for her hospitality. "This party is well known to your Ladyship," said the Reverend Mother, addressing Lady Winefride; "amongst them is the interesting Emily G——, whose health compels her to leave our noviceship. Her spirits are much depressed, and perhaps you will give her the unexpected pleasure of seeing you?"

To this the latter consented, and it was arranged that Geraldine was to remain in the little parlour with the Countess Angela, till they should be summoned to the evening repast.

"At length I see and know you!" exclaimed the ardent Geraldine, when the two new friends were left alone. "Yes! you realize all I had conceived of purity and holy love; let me be where I can look up to you in posture as in thought:" and sinking from the chair in which she had been placed, Geraldine seated herself on a low stool at the Countess Angela's feet. But this tribute only drew the latter to fall on her knees by Geraldine, saying, "Not to me... Oh! never again speak thus to me. Alas!

I have often faltered in the full radiance of light ; you have kept firm footing when the day-star was but dimly seen. Oh ! that I could express to you what I feel when I behold those who have been converted. The joy on their account, the humiliation on my own ; the assurance that, if free from worldly motives, they have, in this step, responded to God's electing love ; the dread that early sympathies and impressions may alone have kept me in the truth, the awful responsibility of the well instructed Catholic !—Could I have done as you have done—God only knows."

"Do you speak thus," said Geraldine, "when you are about to advance a step from which I shrink ; when you are on the eve of a renouncement, in which I cannot even sympathise ?—it is to me so wonderful, so superhuman !"

The Countess smiled, while Geraldine, still grasping her hand, continued, "What you Catholics are brought up to think so holy, yet so simple, a life, Protestants are taught to look upon in a totally different light. For us there is so much to be forgotten of early impressions, before the real position of the monastic life can be justly and impartially weighed. I have hitherto considered a woman's highest duties to be those of domestic life. I have viewed her as born to fulfil these natural claims on her heart, and I own that those duties—those happy duties to which every Protestant girl is taught to look—I do not think I could renounce them."

The Countess Angela kissed Geraldine's glowing brow, and replied, "Does God call on all to serve Him in the same capacity ? Were not the Saints of old, Saint Anna, Saint Elizabeth, holy in the state of matrimony ? Were not Saint Monica, Saint Helena, Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, St Frances de Chantal, wives and mothers ? Let every state and every rank give glory to God."

"And yet," said Geraldine, "you are seeking something beyond."

"Almighty God has shown me the path of life in which to serve and glorify Him," replied the Countess. "The superior part of my soul, as divines would call it, aspires after that entire freedom from earthly ties and affections, that perfect union with Christ my Lord by which my life shall be hid in Him. This has become, blessed be His name, the enduring, the unconquerable, desire of my heart. For it I renounce—I cannot call it sacrifice—my title as Canoness of the order of Saint Anne, the

luxury of riches, the excitement of society—and all this you likewise are capable of renouncing: but Geraldine (let me call you thus), I now forget for ever those scarcely definable, but enchanting, dreams of earthly love, which still have power over you—I could not force myself to earthly espousal. ‘My Maker is my husband, the Lord of Hosts is His name.’ In the spirit of adoption alone can I be a mother. You will have glimpses of this state of feeling, and a respect for it, when you are more fully aware of that pressing onward to perfection which animates the Catholic, and have more the habit of reference to the early Christian Church. In the old Jewish Church you will have remarked, that every woman was taught to expect the possibility of her becoming the Mother of the Messiah; and the virgin death of Jephtha’s daughter was mourned over as a calamity. Yet, when our adorable Saviour did appear, it was as the infant of one who had consecrated herself in purity to God, and to whom marriage was but a guardianship and a name. She led the holy train, whose privilege it will be to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, for they are Virgins.”

“You receive that verse in its literal sense,” said Geraldine, “while I have always taken it figuratively. If, indeed, so high a reward be promised to the Virgin state, I can no longer wonder at your choice; but the principal objection in the minds of Protestants to the monastic life, and I confess it to be my own, is the withdrawing from active benevolence and usefulness to a life of selfish devotion, so that the light, which is commanded to shine before men, these pious but mistaken devotees hide under the bushel.”

“Pardon me,” returned the Countess, “if I remind you of that high example which sanctions, far beyond any isolated sentence from His instructions, a life of retirement and prayer. Our divine Saviour, until the age of thirty, was a recluse; so also was he, of whom it is said, that ‘none born of woman was greater.’ During that period, our Lord gave no public instruction, he set forth no copy, but he prayed for mankind. His holy Mother pondered on His words, and kept them in her heart, during a life of obscurity; and that model for all penitents, Saint Mary Magdalene, in preferring a life of humble meditation, was declared by her Master to have chosen ‘the better part.’ Now, this better part was not a preference for religion, in contrast to the sinful pleasures of life, for Martha was also a great

scint, and we are told that Jesus Christ loved her. It was a preference for meditation and prayer, beyond the active duties of life: and now, dear and interesting friend, let me assure you again, that in following St Martha, you will 'do well,' and that, in following St Mary, to 'the better part,' it must be the free and irrepressible desire of your soul: for you would not otherwise be permitted by your Director to take one step towards the monastic life. But what you mentioned just now of the life of selfish devotion, demands a few more words of comment. Protestants are much mistaken in supposing, that the life of a nun consists solely in meditation and prayer. Education, both of the higher and lower classes of youth, forms a prominent part in the active duty of the sisterhood of almost every order; while household duties, various works of art, and the music of the choir, fill up the hours of a day, which is found only too short. The weeks, the months, glide away imperceptibly, from the very circumstance of a monotony ever busy, of a routine in which every talent bestowed by God is offered, either direct to Himself, or to those of whom He has said, 'In as much as ye did it unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.'

As the Countess finished these words, the portress opened the door, and a dignified and venerable ecclesiastic entered, announced as the 'Right Reverend Dr Gregory,' whom, therefore, Geraldine knew to be the vicar-apostolic of the district to which that county belonged. This was the first time that Geraldine had met an English Catholic Bishop; and as she watched the Countess Angela kneel to receive his blessing, and the sign of the cross with which he accompanied the low yet solemn words, Geraldine's heart glowed, and her eyes filled with happy tears. "This is one," thought she, "who really receives in full belief the sevenfold gifts of the spirit."

"Miss Carrington," said the Countess, "allow me to present you to our bishop, Dr Gregory:" and as Geraldine advanced to meet this mild and benevolent successor of the apostles, she longed to throw herself at his feet, to pour forth all her highly wrought feelings, and to hear him call her, as he had done the Countess, "my good child." A foreign girl would have done so: but our English heroine, with a heart as warm, found it so impossible to conquer her habits of self-control, that she simply courtesied as the bishop took her hand; and the Countess said, 'My lord, you must frequently have heard of the only daughter

of General Carrington, niece also to the Warden of —, who after deep research, and great conflict of mind, has become virtually a Catholic; for her delay in entering the Church is only from respect towards her father, who is expected to arrive from Madrid in the course of the year; and then," added she tenderly to Geraldine, "we shall claim you."

"Young lady," said the bishop, in his quiet and primitive manner, "Bless Almighty God! but bless Him in humility and silence. Let no unguarded and mistaken praise on the part of your Catholic friends, or opposition and reproach on that of Protestants, betray you into forgetfulness of your dependance on the Divine Providence that has hitherto conducted you. It will be safer for you to hide the grace of devotion, than to be elevated by it—to ponder on the great things done for your soul, than to speak of them. Imitate our blessed Lady, who kept the words of her divine Son in her heart, as too precious to be scattered to the world, until He should see fit. Let this be your part until the return of General Carrington."

"It shall, my lord," replied Geraldine.

"Your friend is right," resumed the bishop, "in taking for granted that I have heard of your courage in venturing to be a Catholic. Now, pray for the more rare grace of humility. Nature would bid you to be willing that all those, who may now claim you as their sister in Christ, should show you admiration and respect: but I pray that grace may enable you faithfully to attribute all honour and glory to God's electing love! Remember also the great responsibility of knowing the truth, and say in your heart, 'Let thy work, O Lord, be extolled, and not mine. Let thy holy name be blessed, but to me let nothing be attributed of the praises of men!'"

"Miss Carrington does not seek for applause," said the Countess, fearful lest, in spite of the gentle manner in which all this was said, Geraldine might be hurt.

"Child!" said the bishop, "I do not reprove, where nothing calls for reproof. I merely warn this precious soul of the dangers besetting it, for, believe me, that she who is divested of self, even in her last hour, is a great saint."

CHAPTER XXI.

Higher and yet more high ;
Shake off the cumbering chain which earth would lay
On your victorious wings ; mount ! mount ! Your way
Is through eternity !

Hemans.

A SUMMONS was now given to the "old parlour," to the substantial evening repast—the procuratrix presiding at the bottom of the table, and the confessor at the top, an arrangement which offended Geraldine's chivalrous notions respecting the deference to be paid by the other sex to woman. Introductions now followed ; but, to the regret of all the party, the bishop's carriage was in readiness, and he obliged to return to —, whence he had come to administer confirmation on the previous day. His lordship again spoke kindly to Geraldine, and, as he turned to the Catholics assembled, she cried,

"Oh, let me, let me have the blessing likewise!" and knelt as did the rest, to receive the parting benediction.

That night was Geraldine charmed to lie awake. To have slept would have been to waste those hours of wonderment, in which her own painful identity was forgotten. The main body of the convent, from which the out-quarters were detached, stood dark and majestic in the moon-light. On one side of the court was the range of the upper and lower dormitories, with their double row of cells. All now lay hushed and apparently in repose,—but was it indeed so? were all those hearts at peace? Oh, that she could know the secret history of each recluse! From her little bed she gazed long on that most interesting side of the building. The clock too seemed the most romantic clock she had ever heard, with its stroke at every seven minutes and a half, and its busy summing up of quarters and half hours, and when she dozed for an instant, it roused her ; till, after the hours of night had passed, but not a ray of daylight was visible, it struck four, and immediately the great bell rang for matins. Geraldine sprang from her bed to the window. She saw to her delight the twinkling lights in the cells ; but she felt, at the same time, the chill of the early winter's morning ; and creeping back

to the warmth of her bed, she lay in a theoretic ecstasy, enduring mortification and performing obedience by proxy, while Angela de Grey, who, in spite of the clock, had slept soundly, now arose ; for, although not yet admitted to the privileges of the choir, she had begun, during the short time which intervened before taking the habit, to practise all the austerities which belonged to the life she desired to lead.

“ I think I could live here for ever !” exclaimed Geraldine, after the close of another day, which had been full of the greatest spiritual enjoyment. “ Oh ! Lady Winefride, I cannot help thinking that you have been divinely directed to bring me here ; and should my father cast me off, it is to this convent I will come for my earthly home.”

Lady Winefride had promised to be present at the Countess Angela’s “ cloathing,” which is the religious ceremony the most imposing to the world, when the bridal garments are exchanged for the black serge of the nun. But this admission to the rank of novice could not take place till the postulant had gone through several months of probation ; and, accordingly, on the day previous to that on which Angela was to enter on all the duties of her new life, Lady Winefride purposed to leave the hospitable quarters of the convent. Geraldine had expected a heart-rending scene between the aunt and niece ; but not a tear was shed, though a rather suspicious red tinged the lids of the former as she entered the parlour with the future “ Sister Mary Joseph.”

“ What a name !” exclaimed Geraldine ; “ what could induce you, Countess, surrounded as you are by those beautiful conventual names, joined in every variety, to take the name of Joseph ?”

“ He is a glorious saint,” replied Angela de Grey ; “ the pure and faithful guardian of our blessed Lady, he to whom her divine Son consented to be subject while on earth. He cannot ask amiss, and I never yet invoked him in vain. It is a holy name in religion, and I consider myself most fortunate, that, when poor Mother Mary Joseph died, the last infirmarian, reverend mother kept the name for me. When you come to us,” added she, smiling, “ we will be careful to select some of your favourite names for your choice. What think you of Aloysia Theresa ?”

“ Ah !” cried Geraldine, more gravely, and looking round the old parlour ; “ something seems to tell me that I am not to

leave these old walls for very long. In fact, what is the world to me, but for one being ! and he, perhaps, about to cast me off." She then looked from the parlour window into that of the refectory, in which stood the reading desk, where, during the meals, the younger nuns and novices read aloud. " There is much, very much, that I should love in this life," added she.

" But that feeling is not sufficient," observed Angela. " No one who came to a convent merely from an indefinite love of repose and religious leisure, or from temporary disgust of the world, would ever remain to be professed."

" But my feelings are deeper than you suppose, respecting a hidden yet active life," said Geraldine ; " and I look on you as truly a privileged being."

" How can I ever sufficiently thank Him, who has thus chosen me?" said Angela, clasping her hands, and raising her eyes, now full of tears, to heaven.

" You will write, dear child, after you have been a month in the noviceship," said Lady Winefride, giving the last embrace, as the travelling carriage drove to the door ; and, after a long and tender farewell between the two younger friends, Geraldine tore herself away, and the travellers rapidly returned, through the convent avenue, on the road to London, while Angela, after breathing a fervent prayer for the spiritual welfare of each, banished them from her thoughts, and went in search of Mother Agatha, the mistress of the novices, to confer with her on the duties of the morrow.

After a few days passed in Berkeley Square, Lady Winefride, finding that Geraldine felt much repugnance to returning to the neighbourhood of Elverton, until Sir Eustace should have left England, proposed that they should take a circuitous route home, by the sea-coast : and Geraldine, who wished to escape from London acquaintances, almost as much as she dreaded those of her country neighbourhood, joyfully consented. Accordingly, having given the date of their probable arrival at each place to General Carrington's agent, that the expected letter from Spain might be instantly forwarded, they left London for Sussex ; and Geraldine then gave herself up to the charm of repose from still and excitement, and determined to enjoy the freshness of these, to her, new scenes.

" How magnificent, how boundless, how catholic, is this vast ocean," cried she, one night, when gazing on it from their tem-

porary dwelling ; “ how refreshing to my soul is its expansion. Lady Winefride, do come once more to the window, and let us carry on the analogy.” But Lady Winefride was so intently reading the foreign news in the paper, that she did not at first hear the request, and, when she did so, it was principally to oblige her, on whom she feared many afflictions were still to fall ; and she sate, holding Geraldine’s hand in hers, and looking out with her on that clear mild night, while the latter continued to indulge her poetical imagination in many beautiful comparisons and illustrations ; and Lady Winefride, beguiled from the rough and jarring turmoil of public affairs, to sympathy in the ideal of nature, at length challenged her young friend to express gratitude for that elastic imagination which cheered her on her journey of life.

“ Imagination,” said Geraldine, putting her hand to her forehead, and pondering—“ Imagination is not the word I should wish to use, could I but find a better to express the sentiment, the feeling, the faculty. I know not what it is in me, that finds kindred but rarely in men or books—but lights on it in nature—in music—in painting—in sculpture—seldom in poetry—although it seems to be the poetry of all things beautiful, and such I have called it to myself. Yet there is a yearning of the heart towards these unknown sympathies, that is inexplicable, that is far beyond poetry.”

“ It is,” said Lady Winefride, “ the trace of the Divinity, after which your soul pants ; it is dimly, yet truly discerned in the wreck of beauty and purity of this fallen earth.”

“ Yes,” exclaimed Geraldine, “ you are right ! and this vague perception of something lost before it was known, this tremulous grasp of heaven’s shadows passing over the objects of sight—this listening for tones which seem to mingle then to leave the harmonies of earth—this intercourse in language of no sound or memory—this interchange of sympathy, followed by the blank of desertion—all this proves the soul of man to have departed from, but not totally to have lost, the heavenly intercourse he held in Paradise. Yes, it must be so ! else why the gush of tears which often follows the contemplation of infancy asleep ; is it not that this baptismal innocence speaks to our soul of what we once were, of what God would have us to be, of what, if faithful, we are destined to become, by union with him who is unsullied purity ? I have heard,” continued she, “ that our divines have supposed

the privation of heaven to constitute the extreme woe of hell. 'The pain of loss,' I think they call it;—is it not something of this nature which you suppose to constitute the restlessness of the soul on earth?

"With this difference," replied Lady Winefride, "that, in the eternal 'pain of loss,' all hope is gone; while on earth, and during the purgatorial detention in the separate state, we are full of hope in Christ, who is with his suffering members every where."

"I trust His all-powerful presence is in *that* house," said Geraldine, pointing to a handsome edifice, to which her attention had been for some time directed; and Lady Winefride gazed now with her on the open windows of the upper room, by which female figures passed stealthily at intervals, their shadows being dimly seen by the subdued light of the lamp within. It was the death-room of one, who, in the prime of manhood, and with a form modelled to strength and beauty, had wasted by a local and virulent disease. The bed was perfumed, and the attached, though sensitive, attendants, had each a flower or flask, as, with a conviction of eternity's approach, they closed round the dear object of so much and long tried sympathy and love. Relief to the sufferer, and safety to the group around him, had compelled the free admission of air, and every window was thrown up to the gentle coming of the southern breeze, from an ocean glittering in calm delight under a full unclouded moon. Alas! Nature, thou art a fond but capricious mother to thy equally wayward children! Man smiles, and would rejoice—and thou dost cast around him whirlwinds, the thunder and the flood. Again he muses, and is sad; whilst in thy gayest mood, sparkling and carolling in ecstasy, thou canst not give him sympathy! Not so the mother of this dying man, who, planted at the pillow's head, watched silently. Her's had been the active post till now; long journeys into foreign lands, for change of clime and discipline; converse and books, and seeming cheerfulness, as time rolled on, bearing no remedy; and round the sick couch next were placed, when books and converse failed, flowers and birds, and golden fish, each in their turn attracting for a time the listless eye of pain. But was this all? O no! That mother's care extended far beyond the soothing tenderness of human thought; and often from her lips to his attentive ear, the prayer of faith and resignation rose to Him who chastens but in mercy. Still to the Protestant all suffering is mysterious. He does not hold its

expiatory effect. He does not admit the consolation, that every pang on this side of the grave, if borne for Christ, lessens "the pain of loss," which the soul, detained in Purgatory, must feel, until the heavy debt of sin is paid unto the uttermost farthing. He is meek and resigned, nay more, he is heroic, under bodily torments; but he cannot rejoice that these "afflictions" will bring him *sooner* to his "eternal weight of glory." He cannot exclaim with the Catholic, "Oh Lord! what have I done that thou shouldst treat me as thou treatest thy chosen servants, that thou shouldst favour me with this external and internal woe!"

CHAPTER XXII.

Art thou come from the far-off land at last,
 Thou that hast wandered long;
 Thou hast come to a home whence the smile hath passed
 With the merry voice of song.

Hemans.

Two months had now passed, since Geraldine had left Elverton Hall, when, on entering the sitting-room at the hotel, one morning, at St Leonard's, she perceived the long-expected letter from her father's agent. She instantly seized it, but found that it contained no enclosure; and, half relieved, half disappointed, she broke the seal, and read as follows:—

"MADAM,"

"General Carrington arrived on Monday, the 12th instant, at Portsmouth, and was in London last night. His return has been hastened, as I understand, by the receipt of a letter from yourself. I have the pleasure of announcing him to be in perfect health. He purposes being at the Hall on Thursday, his business with me requiring no longer stay in town. I beg to offer my congratulations; and remain, &c.

"JAMES THORNTON."

Two hours after this, Geraldine and her deeply anxious friend were again in their travelling carriage, rapidly traversing the cross-country into Staffordshire.

"Not one line from himself!" at length exclaimed the terror-stricken Geraldine. "Never have I felt my strength, both of mind and body, so totally fail me. I have no cue for my future line of conduct: a vague sense of coming misery is all I can feel. A father in wrath is an awful being."

"And He for whom you brave his wrath, is a still more awful Being," replied Lady Winefride.

"Oh, yes!" said Geraldine; "if I can but act up to my convictions, if I be but faithful to the light given me, I shall be supported. But my brain reels."

"Suppose we begin our usual Litany," said Lady Winefride, "on this first stage of our journey. Great calm and strength follow the due performance of our ordinary duty."

This journey from Sussex into Staffordshire, took place on the day preceding that on which General Carrington had purposed being at his home, and it required rapid and late travelling, to arrive even at Burnleigh to sleep. This, however was accomplished, and, at eleven o'clock, Geraldine was once more under the roof of her friend, and laid her exhausted head on her pillow.

"Who am I?" and "where am I?" were her mental queries, on first waking to consciousness: but all she knew, and all she feared to know, soon rushed on her. Her father's image filled her mind, and so absorbed her, as to make her incapable of receiving comfort even from the presence of Mr Everard, who was awaiting her in the breakfast room. "Well!" cried he, "I am come to ride with you as far as the Park gates; for my conscience tells me that I have partly helped you into this scrape, and heaven knows, that any thing to give you comfort would be a cordial to me. So the General says nothing?" Geraldine, perfectly subdued, could only weep: but she wept principally to find herself so powerless in her wonted energy and self-command: so perfectly unable to act the part she had assigned herself, and which she felt due to the great cause she had espoused. She had intended to appear before her father in the meek yet calm dignity resulting from the elevation of her thoughts, and the utter disengagement of her affections from all earthly things: but this seemed destined not to be for this self-dignity and esteem,

this pride of adversity, required to be humbled, that the offering might be farther purified, which God had accepted of her. "Oh, how deceitful is that courage of the flesh, which ventures all, which bears all, and is well pleased with itself for never hesitating! Oh, how it nourishes self-confidence, and a certain upliftedness of heart! This courage, which often wonderfully edifies the public, hugs within it a certain satisfaction, that is a subtle poison: but a soul that is weakened and humbled, that no longer finds any refuge in herself, that fears, that is troubled, that is sorrowful even to death, that cries out, in fine, as Jesus Christ did on the cross, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' that soul is much more purified, more loosened from herself, more annihilated to all self-desire, than strong souls, who enjoy in peace the fruits of their virtue. Happy, then, the soul, which God casts down and bruises, from which God has taken away all strength in herself, that she may no longer support herself, but lean on Him, who sees and pities her poverty; the soul which is content to bear not only the crosses from without, but the great internal cross of discouragement with which all the others would weigh as nothing!"*

"I must not let you dwell too long on one only theme," said Mr Everard, at length, as Geraldine continued to weep; "let me tell you all the news I can, before you again journey forth. In the first place, the new ministry is broken up, so that our friend's wild plan of starting for America, is knocked on the head. I met him yesterday, to laugh at him, and to offer him, on behalf of the new ministry, some clerk's office in New Zealand, should the Antipodes prove far enough." Mr Everard's purpose was effected: he saw that he had roused Geraldine's attention, and he continued: "Geraldine, listen to me, for I speak with the authority of a faithful friend. You have determined on a step, in taking which, all those who know your father, tremble for you; while, from a mistaken sense of punctilious honour, you are about to drive away from his family and his country, one who would supply to you that father's place; for Eustace de Grey loves you, Geraldine Carrington, and, by the civil death of the Countess Angela, will be a match for any heiress in the kingdom."

"Mr Everard," said she, "I understand too well the noble mind of him to whom you allude, not to feel that he would never

* "Treatise on Dejection," by Fenelon.

make this avowal of attachment to me ; why then tell me that which I ought never to have known ?”

“ I will tell you why,” replied Mr Everard, “ because I am weary of seeing you wretched, and making every one else so. You must be conscious that De Grey would prize you for yourself, and reckon himself possessed of a boundless treasure, were he to receive you portionless from an irritated father : but portionless you should never be. Who could be so dear to my old heart as the child of my first and only love ?”

This generous declaration touched Geraldine’s grateful and filial heart. She took the old man’s hand, and kissed it ; but at length she said ; “ Should my father pardon me, and consent to my becoming a Catholic, I should feel bound, in filial duty, to follow his wishes in every other respect. It is not probable, from his estrangement from Sir Hugh de Grey, that our union could give him aught but pain ; and if I am to be an outcast from my father’s house, I prefer the refuge of a convent.”

“ Never !” cried Mr Everard. “ These dreams must be given up. Your father still loves the memory of Hugh de Grey. Religious disputes were the cause of the estrangement : he only wishes for an opportunity of reconciliation ; but more of this hereafter. Promise me, Geraldine, that, should the General favour your union with a Catholic, you will then remember Eustace.”

“ I think I may safely promise that,” said Geraldine, sadly smiling.

“ By the bye,” continued he, “ there has been a circumstance mentioned to me, which, if it be true, will change the gossip of the neighbourhood considerably. Pray, have you ever known the secret, disclosed by the General’s confidential servant in her death-bed confession ? I mean the housekeeper, old Goodwin.”

“ How could I ever know it,” said Geraldine, “ if made in confession ? I remember the excitement caused at the time amongst the household, and concluded that various improbable stories would be invented ; but the Warden supposed poor Goodwin to be delirious, and therefore to rave about the person to whom she was the most fondly attached.”

“ Well,” said Mr Everard, “ that same paper which attacked De Grey, has now given the public some fine verses about the General’s having been wrecked on the ‘ Goodwin Sands !’ ”

“ If it be,” said Geraldine, “ that a second marriage has been

formed, and an heir born to the estates of Elverton, what an irksome load of responsibility will be removed from me! How my heart will yearn towards a tie I have never known! Oh! how could my father doubt my love for a young brother!"

Mr Everard was silent, for he felt that, if there were truth in the report, it belonged to the father to disclose his own secret to his child. Lady Winefride had purposely left Mr Everard to speak alone with Geraldine, little conscious of the topics he had chosen; but she now entered to secure a few minutes with her loved guest, before parting, and to suggest some subjects on which to dwell during her drive to Elverton Hall. Geraldine still trembled and wept, but she had accepted from God this farther trial of the loss of her moral and intellectual strength, and her tears fell without bitterness. Lady Winefride was deeply affected—more deeply than those who best knew her had ever seen her moved, and Mr Everard seemed scarcely to know which to comfort and support. His hesitation, however, was but for a moment, and he followed Geraldine to her carriage where, on account of the presence of Mrs Kelsoe, the conversation was continued in French.

At the lodge gates of Elverton Hall, Geraldine received the last friendly grasp from her old friend, who walked thence into the town, and with her attendants only, she drove up to the entrance-door of her home. "Is my father arrived?" was her first breathless inquiry. "No, ma'am, the General's directions are for dinner at eight o'clock, and it has only just struck six."

This was a reprieve. Geraldine alighted, and some feeling of vigour and strength, returned from the power of association, as she crossed the hall and entered the saloon, both of which were in a blaze of light. She observed also that the conservatory was thrown open, that the men-servants were in their dress liveries, and that all spoke of joyful greeting to the long absent master of Elverton.

"This is just as it ought to be," said Geraldine to the steward, who followed her for sanction and applause. "This should be—this is a gala day; but I hope that Mrs Kelsoe has been equally thoughtful. Tell her that I will dress directly."

"Plait my hair, Kelsoe, as it used to be dressed when my father left me—'à la Grecque'—and fasten it with the long gold arrow that was my mother's. For the rest I care not—but tell Hilton, if he hear the distant sound of a carriage, not to

take every servant to the hall door, but to remember that I am beyond the reach of any sound from the avenue, and to send some one directly to me."

Half an hour from that time, the active though trembling fingers of Mrs Kelsoe had accomplished their task; and Geraldine, dressed in black velvet, with her hair arranged as she had directed, and her father's last gift, a superb bracelet, on her arm, descended to the saloon. Another half hour passed, during which Geraldine recognised the handwriting of Katherine Graham, and of other familiar friends, in the address of several letters which lay awaiting her notice; but she could open none, her whole soul was absorbed by conjectures of what would be her father's conduct. She could form no plan for herself. Would he take no notice of her letter, and meet her as if nothing had happened? But then he had his own secret to impart, and, from what Mr Everard had farther told her in the carriage, the revealing it had become a matter of necessity, as well as one of bitterness. "Thank God," she cried at length, "for that sympathy which is implanted throughout His Church! Thank God for the communion of saints, and that, bewildered as I am, and incapable of collecting my thoughts in prayer, I have just sense enough left to say, 'Pray for me, pray for me!'"

The distant sounds were now heard of a carriage swiftly advancing on the smooth gravel; then the sounds were lost; but the opening of doors and murmuring of voices proved that others believed in its approach, and at length a loud peal at the entrance, and the rush of servants to the hall, proclaimed the arrival of General Carrington.

And where was Geraldine? Swift as thought she had passed through the file of domestics, and, before the General had glanced around him, she had thrown herself on his bosom, and was locked in his arms.

The family welcome, first smothered from respect, then rose throughout the group of servants, and the General recognised and spoke to each in turn, as he passed, with Geraldine on his arm, to the saloon. But on how seemingly slight a cause may fresh mistrust be conveyed. Geraldine had been clasped in her father's arms; but could he prevent it, when she had thrown herself there in the presence of all the household? She still hung on his arm; but that arm did not press hers, and, in his

condescending and lingering notice of the dependants, she felt that he dreaded to be alone with her. Geraldine knew her father's self-possession before witnesses, she listened to his encomiums, throughout the dinner, on the beauty, the cheerfulness, the warmth of his home, and the brilliancy of her looks heard his praises of England, and his graphic account of most interesting scenes in the civil conflict in Spain; and was sufficiently his daughter to have regained her own outward composure, and to question him respecting his voyage, and his opinion of the state of politics in which he found his own country. The General himself asked no questions, he talked loud and with more than usual spirit, but the subjects were all on strictly neutral ground. At dessert, Mr Hilton, the steward, was sent for, and after the usual period for her remaining in the dining-room, Geraldine withdrew.

"Does he then intend to banish the subject altogether?" thought Geraldine. But, at the close of an hour's solicitude, she was joined by her father, and one glance at his countenance sufficed to show her that he did *not* intend to banish the subject altogether. He advanced to her, as she rose, and perceiving that, notwithstanding every effort, her whole frame shook, and her lips moved convulsively from suppressed emotion, he drew her arm within his own, and walked with a determined, and, as it seemed, stern concentrated step, into the library, the doors of which he not only shut, but bolted. Geraldine's terror returned with double force at all these precautions for an uninterrupted, unwitnessed interview; and it was by an almost superhuman effort of mind that she retained her consciousness of what passed between them. General Carrington was visibly under the influence of emotion, at least as powerful, and checked by as strong a determination of self-control. The moment when either should give way would probably be the signal for the overflow of the other's pent up feelings, and each, intuitively conscious of this, kept at bay. He pointed to a chair. Geraldine obeyed, but, as her father remained standing, she arose, pressing both her hands upon the impetuous throbbings of her heart. During the past six months, she had unceasingly, and upon principle, acted over to herself this dreaded interview. She had, in imagination, exhausted every possible turn her father's feelings might take. she had to them adapted her

manner, her expressions. She had by degrees sacrificed every thing to his possible demands: she had in heart renounced her home, her fortune, the countenance and respectability of his protection, the endearments of his affection, the privilege of attending his dying bed. But, with all this preparation, little did she foresee the termination of this interview. The silence to her tortured mind seemed endless, yet every fibre of her frame quivered, when that silence was broken.

"Geraldine!" said the General, in a low smothered voice. "have you made your abjuration?"

"No."

"You have waited my presence?"

"I have."

"For what purpose?"

"To gain your consent, dear father."

"And if you had it not?"

"I had then done all I could do, as your child."

"What next?"

"I should act openly upon my inward convictions."

"Great God!" cried the General. His clasped hands partly concealed his face, but his daughter perceived the working of the muscles, and throbbing of the temple arteries. She now feared for him, and self was forgotten. Placing her hand gently on his arm, she murmured, "My dearest father!"

"Stop!" cried he, and the wild expression of his countenance, as suddenly he grasped her arm, gave a new turn to her fears. She must have shrieked at the torture of his iron grasp, but that her utterance was choaked: for that her father, in the delirium of disappointed pride and affection, was about to curse the child, who would disgrace him, seemed to be now the certainty disclosed to her. Her slender form and woman's strength, utterly powerless beneath his grasp, stirred not. She felt as if she never could survive that hour, and "God alone in his eternity she alone in her immortality," absorbed every faculty of her soul. How long an interval was thus passed in suspension between two worlds, Geraldine never knew. She was apart from time. At length recalled to earth by the voice she had ever instinctively obeyed,—"Geraldine!" cried General Carrington, in an altered tone, and releasing her from his hold; "Look up! Fear nothing!" And, as she opened her eyes once more, and

fixed them on her father, "Geraldine," said he at length, "this hour of deep humiliation I accept in penance for the moral cowardice of my past life; for having, during a life of fifty years, outwardly denied the faith I cherished. Come to my arms, my noble child! Your father is a CATHOLIC!"

END OF VOL. II.

VOLUME THE THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

“The retrospective glance
Of pensive memory fell, with the gleam
Of hope celestial, on the wings of time.”

NINE years after the events recorded in our preceding volumes in the opening spring of 183—, the bells were ringing merrily in a sea-port town of our western coast, a band of music played on the pier, and in the placid waters of the harbour, vessels were lying at anchor, while the chief object of interest appeared to be a steamer, which, for the first time, was destined to carry passengers and freight to the Sister Isle. Several of these passengers were parading the pier, together with the idle and curious of the town. “She ought, by rights, to have started to-day,” said a sailor, in reply to the question of a stranger of noble and foreign appearance; “but it’s all well as it is, for a large party of the passengers don’t come into town till to-night.”

“Do you chance to know at which of the hotels this party is expected?” said the stranger.

“No, sir,” replied the sailor.

“Nor the number of the party?”

“There are four, I believe, sir, expected on board. Can you give something, sir, to a poor tar, that’s been wounded in honourable service! Thank ye, sir. I’ll be sure to find out the party for you, sir, whenever they may put up; but then where am I to find you, sir?” The stranger wrote in pencil his temporary address on a visiting card, and throwing it to the sailor, turned from him and from the motley throng, fixing his eyes upon the steamer, in deep, and apparently, melancholy thought;

till, at length, roused by the national air, now played by the band, as they passed him in their march from the pier, he caught an object of engrossing interest in a travelling equipage, advancing with rapid pace from the north road, and traced its progress to the principal hotel of the place.

This rencontre, however, produced only disappointment, for the expected passengers of the Royal Victoria steam-packet were still far from the town of * * *. Their travelling carriage had, on the preceding evening, stopped at a little inn near the convent gates of N——, and shortly after, one of the nuns had been summoned to the convent parlour, to welcome a long-absent friend. Nine years had seemingly made no change in the fair face of the nun ; for the wrapping head-dress, which had served to hide her more youthful charms, equally concealed the ravages of time. The hair, the brow, the throat, could tell no chronological tales. These nine years, also, had been passed, as though they had been nine months, in pious useful monotony, with peace of mind and heart ; and the simplicity which pervaded thought, language, and manner, assisted in retaining the appearance of youth.

It was not thus with her whom she greeted. The interval from three-and-twenty, to two-and-thirty, passed in vivid thought, and action, and feeling, with joys and sorrows of this earth's emotion, had brought forth, in all its lights and shadows, each hidden quality of the mind and heart, and stamped its impress on the countenance of the guest. The lofty brow was still smooth, candid, and open, but there were hollows at the temple, and a depth in the eye, which belong not to youth, and something there was of an appeal to the sympathy of others, something of a softened, matured, and chastened expression, which more than atoned for the rich bloom which had passed for ever !

After a long silent embrace, the nun spoke ; " At length, the : I see and speak to you once more ! "

" Yes ! Angela," replied the widowed Geraldine de Grey " I have at length returned, to make amends, if you be so willing, for the silent years which followed my bereavement. I have in truth much to tell, and I have therefore resolved to crave a night's hospitality at your convent, and some hours alone with you, before I proceed on my journey."

" Ah ! how willingly will both be granted," said Angela ; " but are you alone ? "

"I am not travelling alone," said Lady de Grey, "but my companions are at the little inn, until to-morrow. I arranged it thus, that I might give myself entirely to you for the remainder of this day, having to speak not only of the last two silent years; but in order to make you perfectly comprehend both my position and my feelings, I must give you a rapid sketch of those earlier years, and of that lost happiness, on which I dared not dwell when first a widow."

"And can you do so now?" said Angela, as she looked on the faded countenance of the once brilliant Geraldine.

"I can," replied she, "for the past now causes no strong emotion: I live only in the future; yet I scarcely know whether to tell you at once the step I contemplate, or to lead you to it gradually by a history of my life, from the time we last spoke confidentially to each other."

Angela's heart said, "give me the truth at once, and afterwards the explanation," but she had long schooled that heart to bear denial, and refusing it the indulgence of its tender curiosity, she said,—“I have no choice but for your greater consolation.”

"Then I will first give you an account of the principal events of my life, and of my mental history, that you may trace in all, the wonderful mercies of our God. Go, therefore, dear Angela, to obtain all necessary leave for remaining the whole evening a listener to your guest. Find at what hour to-morrow I can thank dear mother prioress for her hospitality, and then return to me,—for the evening draws on."

This was soon accomplished, and the two friends drew their chairs close together. The eventful history commenced, and, ere the hour for closing the convent door towards the out-quarters, it had terminated, and Angela possessed the confidence of her friend; but we cannot thus briefly dismiss the joys and sorrows of our heroine; and, while she again rests within the convent precincts, we will fill up the brief and rapid sketch.

The title of "Child of prosperity" could never, perhaps, have been more truly applied to Geraldine Carrington, than when, in the autumn succeeding the events of her father's return to England, she accompanied him to the chosen land of Italy. Three months had she been a member of the holy Church she had

chosen, or rather, to which she had been chosen by the divine Shepherd of the fold, and her conditional baptism, her confirmation, and the ever-adorable mysteries of the altar, had shed their strengthening and sanctifying graces on her soul. To this interior joy had been added General Carrington's open sanction of her conduct, which induced many of those cherished Protestant friends, who had previously upbraided or deserted her, to return with renewed affection: the Catholic body, to whom she had been but little personally known, now sought her; she became the object of kind interest to both parties, and had but one cause of sorrow, which was the constraint and gloom which still hung over her father. And from this, too, he aroused as from a spell, when again on the Continent; both heart and mind expanded, and Geraldine felt once more that she was his darling child.

While on this journey, he related to her much of the history of his concealed faith, the premature discovery of which had been so galling to him. "That good creature Goodwin," said he, and the steward, were, after the death of your mother, the only persons entrusted with my secret, except, of course, my confessor; and he had my promise, that I would divulge the truth, and openly exercise my religion, as soon as you, Geraldine, should be of age. Would to God that I had done so; but military distinction engrossed my soul, I yielded to ambition; and Catholic emancipation, which was granted the year after my last promotion, sealed my lips, as I thought, for ever. Your own proud sense of honour, Geraldine," continued he, "would tell you how impossible it would be to divulge, in the prosperity of one's party, whether in creed or politics, that which in adversity one had been driven to conceal, and you may imagine what my feelings must have been, when this avowal was torn from me by treachery, and made the topic for every idler's comment. My only plan since then, in dignity as in policy, has been to approve and patronize your open conversion to Catholicity during the hateful months of my stay in England. It is for me no effort to say, 'My native land good night.' My nature is too akin to her gloomy clouds and chilly temperament. Give me my contrast, in the sunny skies and light-hearted peasantry of the continent."

Geraldine was in too much excitement of happiness to analyse her father's sentiments; it was enough for her that he treated her with love and confidence and with wrapt interest she listened

to his subsequent history, especially to the fact, that during many years the subterranean chapel in the abbey ruin had been the sacred spot where General Carrington had met his spiritual father, and attended the duties of his holy faith.

It was early in October when our travellers entered Italy, on the eve of the festival of the Rosary, and there were sights and sounds of joy, as they journeyed onwards, to make the heart feel as if born anew. The rustic altars and the garlands, the votive offerings, the evening litanies, gave a foretaste of the feast which lay before them, when, on the ninth morning of their journey, the postilion stopped on the noted spot on the level of the Campagna, and the General, making his daughter stand on the seat of the open carriage, exclaimed, with the exulting Italian, "Roma!"

"Ah!" cried Geraldine, "do I really behold Rome! Rome from whence seems to arise the mystic chain of communion with the heavenly Jerusalem, and towards which, even from my childhood, my heart has so strongly yearned! Surely it is in mercy to the weakness of his creature that God permits me such earthly happiness!"

"You are in the land of enthusiasm," said her father, smiling, "and therefore may give vent to your feelings without dread of sneer or sarcasm;" but Geraldine could exclaim no more; her heart was too full of emotion as she continued to gaze on the "Eternal City," round which, in homage, nature sinks subdued.

On the morning succeeding this, to her, memorable day of her entrance into Rome, Geraldine visited the principal object of interest within its consecrated walls, and the joy of her heart continued unabated. Her father was her sole guide and companion, and his fervour, if not equal to her own, was at least sufficient to encourage the free expression of her sentiments. Again and again did they visit 'St Peter's; and no Jewish maiden, within the temple raised by the favoured king to the Jehovah of her nation, could feel more the majesty of the divine presence, than did our Christian heroine, when, kneeling before the altar whereon was the consummation of the typical rites, offered to the same triune Deity, in the temple of the Christian world. She traced the humble rise of the Jewish church, flying from their enemies, wandering in the desert, and fixing their temporary altar where they could best hope for security,—to the prosperous time, when, all things being ripe, God commanded that a temple should

be built unto him, and his "glory filled the house:" she then recalled the similar progress of the Christian visible church, passing through the red sea of persecution, and desert of famine, fixing their altar where they could best hope for security, at length could erect to Him this thrice sacred edifice for the covenant of the new law: saying with Solomon, "Is it then to be thought that God should indeed dwell upon earth? For if the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house which I have built? But have regard to thy servant, and to his supplications, oh Lord, my God: hear the hymn and prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee this day, that thy eyes may be open upon this house night and day, upon the house of which thou hast said, My name shall be there. And when a man shall know the wound of his own heart, and shall spread forth his hands in this house, then hear thou in heaven, in the place of thy dwelling, and forgive!"

After having given all the time, and thought, and feeling, he considered due to St Peter's, General Carrington, accompanied by a learned Italian friend, took our heroine at once from Christian Rome to the ruins of her predecessor, that chronological and historical order might be preserved in her sight-seeing. Geraldine felt some regret at postponing her visits to the other basilica, especially those of St John Lateran and Santa Croce, but she had no avowed wish opposed to that of her father: accordingly, the following month was devoted to the fulfilling the plan laid down, and, at its close, Geraldine had visited every spot of classical interest in ancient Rome, and this under every advantage which could enhance her enjoyment. Like every Protestant female of education, she had, from her childhood, been made familiar with the poetical fictions, as well as the historical facts, of Roman antiquity, and could understand, if she could not always sympathize in, the classical enthusiasm of her friends. Still she had not found in the antiquarian or mythological details of temples, tombs, palaces, triumphal arches, baths, and aqueducts, sufficient food for the present state of her mind; and the retrospective, and more general view which succeeded the individual sight-seeing, was more in accordance with it. She would now gaze from the tower of the Capitol, or from the terrace of the Palatine Hill, over the ruined trophies of the Queen of the Seven Hills: tracing her history from the pastoral to the iron and then golden ages of her splendour, and through those degenerate years

which might be termed the ages of brass and clay, to the terrific scourges which at length laid low the mistress of the world. In silent awe and admiration she beheld fulfilled the prophecy of the hallowed seer of Patmos, and as she traced the immense extent of the ruins, could not but join in the predicted lament: "Alas! alas! that great city, which was clothed with fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and was gilt with gold and precious stones, and pearls, for in one hour are so great riches come to nought!" The centre—the personification—the essence, as it were, of Paganism, who had said in her proud heart, "I sit a queen, I am no widow, and sorrow I shall not see," now lay humbled in the dust; and Geraldine, touched by the remembrance of her genius and her glory, would forget that "she had drunk of the blood of the saints, and of the martyrs of Jesus," till the distant dome of the Christian temple meeting her view, would bid her join the song of triumph, saying, "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath judged your judgments on her, Alleluia!"

Among the majestic ruins stood one which was fraught with constant interest to the Christian; and Geraldine, no longer occupied by its details, would unweariedly sit on the moss-grown corridors of the Coliseum and gaze on the vast area beneath. The sainted forms of the early martyrs were grouped before her, in venerable age and maiden youth, around were the countless multitudes, their subdued, but heartless tones of expected entertainment, mingling with the low growl of the beasts of prey in the dens below. Then arose the increased stir of excitement, as the guards withdrew from the victims, and the keepers threw open the doors of the den, when the wild yells of the beasts were overpowered by the deafening shouts of the populace. So wrapt would Geraldine frequently become in these vivid retrospective visions, that it was difficult to rouse her attention to the present soothing and lovely scene presented in that vast area; yet gladly did she now look on the cross which marks the consecrated ground, and watch the succession of devout Christians kneel and fervently kiss the symbol of their faith, and hope, and love;—once the scorn, and now the standard of the Eternal City.

One evening, one bright Italian evening, when Geraldine had revisited this favourite spot with her father, they, for the first time, encountered one of the many parties of their English acquaintance, from whom they had hitherto escaped recognition.

Protestants, English Protestants in Rome, were exactly the beings most formidable to the General's morbid sense of ridicule, and his tactics had hitherto preserved him from the encounter. The meeting, however, was now on neutral ground, and nothing seemed likely to prevent each party from being as correctly pagan as could be desired. Colonel Leonard, fellow-officer with General, when Major, Carrington, in the early and glorious conflicts in the Peninsula, had, since the peace of Europe, become a successful author on subjects connected with his past career, and at the time of this meeting in the Coliseum, was the guide, tutor, and playmate of his two fine boys, just emancipated from Eton, filled with classical learning and enthusiasm, and with levity on every Christian theme. Their elder sister, and a valiant old lady, their grandmother, formed the family party. After the introduction, and some preliminary talk, the conversation was kept up with ease and spirit between the two elder gentlemen, and the youngest boy, who seemed under but small restraint. Our heroine listened for a time with interest to the dedication of that vast theatre by Titus to his gods, in the slaughter of five thousand wild beasts, and the combats of the gladiators, she thought with admiration also, of the mock naval fight, when numerous galleys rode with ease in the artificial waters of the area; but in vain did she hope, that when the feats of the mariners, the gladiators, and the wild beasts, had been duly commemorated, the blood of Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, and other venerated Christians, might be remembered; the party moved forward only to bestow lamentations on the broken marble seats, the overthrown steps and vomitories,—when, as they descended into the area, the cross, from its conspicuous size and position, attracted their attention, and a chill struck on Geraldine's heart on seeing her father return the smile and shrug of Colonel Leonard, as they together looked on the sacred symbol.

“The French, during their occupation of Rome, took the liberty to knock down that huge black cross,” said Colonel Leonard, “but the pious souls, here, have stuck it up again, in defiance of all taste, and have also brought back those horrible pictures of the pilgrimage of the crucifixion, which are enough to scare away all but papists.”

“Look!” cried Charles Leonard, the youngest boy, “if you will watch those people kneeling, you will see them kiss that old black cross, to gain two hundred days' pardon for all their sins.”

"Come, General," said Colonel Leonard, "now is our time, let us kiss and be cleansed!"

The General laughed, and the party advanced to the centre of the area.

"Why does not my father take this opportunity to say, that the kissing that cross can release him from the guilt of no sin whatever?" thought our heroine, as she passed with the rest to the spot hallowed by the martyrs' blood, and by the privilege granted by the Church. An aged Capuchin friar had just given place to a young peasant girl, who knelt and kissed, with earnest simple devotion, the holy emblem; and the instant she arose, Geraldine, who had lingered behind the rest of the party, knelt also at the foot of the cross, and devoutly pressed to it her lips.

"Two hundred days' indulgence for Miss Carrington," cried the young Charles, who alone had observed her. The rest turned, and greeted her with mirth as a practical lover of a joke, while the peasant girl fixed her eyes earnestly on Geraldine, and then, reassured by the expression of her countenance, smiled, and pursued her pilgrimage round the area, where were fixed, at intervals, the stations of the Passion.

"I declare I should never have thought you had so much fun in you, Miss Carrington," cried Charles Leonard.

"But," said his sister, laughing, "do you know that these Protestant pranks will not do in Rome, Charles? we must be all on our good behaviour."

"Ah!" cried the General, entering seemingly into the jest, while he cast an awful glance at his daughter, "so, I find, that I am not to trust you from my sight, Geraldine. Here, take my arm."

"Miss Carrington," said Colonel Leonard, "is only following the proverb of doing at Rome as do the Romans."

"Colonel Leonard," said Geraldine in a firm voice, regardless of the pressure on her arm, "I am a Catholic, and may therefore well do at Rome as do the Romans."

The silence which ensued was first broken by General Carrington, in a voice unchanged to all, save one practised ear: "Why, if it be impossible not to feel an increase of 'patriotism on the plains of Marathon,' and of 'piety at Iona,' who can expect to catch no inspiration within the walls of St Peter's? We are all Catholics, I suspect, if the truth were told, while under that dome. And what think you," continued he, turning still

more confidentially round to Colonel Leonard, "will be the enthusiasm of this pretty little daughter of mine, during the ceremonies which are approaching?"

Colonel Leonard, much puzzled, gave another shrug, said something about beauty in tears of devotion, and of the tendency of the female mind to the poetry of religion; while the General devoutly wished his friend, with his party, as far from himself and Rome, as might be consistent with charity, and the welfare of the Leonard family.

"What think you, Colonel," said he, "of wintering at Naples, and returning here for the Easter ceremonies, according to the usual mode with the English in Italy?"

Geraldine heard not the plans for Colonel Leonard's winter and spring quarters, for her heart fluttered as it had learned to do in England, and many sad though indistinct presages filled her mind. They had now reached the Forum, having intended merely to pass through its grass-grown solitude. But this was not to be: for, on this wholly Pagan spot, all breathed more freely, and amidst the broken capitals and fallen pillars of the ancient senate, the hitherto-silent Henry Leonard was moved to eloquence, and his auditors to sympathy and applause. Geraldine, seated on stones which once had echoed to the harangues, the acclamations, the popular tumults of the ancient republic, gazed and listened with interest to the young and impassioned orator, as he recalled the days when Scipio there had trod—Cicero there had accused the guilty Cataline—and there too had Cæsar fallen, while Brutus had there remembered only that he was a Roman. The senate which had dictated laws to the world which its arms had conquered, had now passed, like its crumbling walls, for ever. Hushed were the voices of her orators, stilled the throbbing hearts of her patriots, and tears stood in the eyes of the young enthusiast, as with extended arms he invoked the manes of the mighty dead, bidding them bring back the greatness, the freedom, the stern virtue and patriotism of their own, their only Rome; for she alone had been the queen of cities, the empress of the world!

As the speaker paused, Geraldine thought of that highly-gifted scholar and orator, who, like Henry Leonard, had been so fascinated by the studies of the schools, and the charms of rhetoric, as to despise the style of the Scriptures, being unable from the false glare of his former studies to relish their humility, or enter

into their spirit, till truth having prevailed, and all the powers of that mighty mind and glowing heart won over to its cause, the great convert had burst forth in a strain surpassing all that heathen voice could utter, or heathen thought conceive.* She thought too of the vision of St Jerome, wherein having replied at the judgment-seat, that he was a Christian, "Thou liest," said the judge, "Thou art a Ciceronian, for the works of that author fill thy heart." But Geraldine's thoughts were recalled from the early ages of the Christian Church, when, aroused by the young orator's appeal, there suddenly appeared from behind the three remaining columns of Jupiter Stator, not the great father of the mythological world, nor any of his invoked worshippers, but two modern Christians; one, by his implements, apparently an artist, and the other—(who, on his approach, was greeted with friendly warmth by Colonel Leonard)—proved to be that writer on Pagan and Papal Rome, whom Geraldine had met the preceding winter at Sedge-moor Priory. After some desultory conversation, the whole party, including the artist, a young Italian, moved homeward into the modern city; and, as the 'dolce far niente' was the order of the day, they all by invitation proceeded to the Palazzo P——, the temporary residence of General Carrington and his daughter.

The first object which attracted the attention of the young Italian, in the reception-rooms of the Palazzo, was the Spanish guitar, which, on account of its being an old favourite as well as a light travelling companion, our heroine had brought with her from England. From a comparison between the guitars of Spain and Italy, it was an easy course to try the tones of the former, and, at Geraldine's request, Signor Busto, after a rapid and executive prelude, accompanied himself in several popular airs with great feeling and effect.

During this performance, the two young Etonians were disturbing their sister from any enjoyment she might have had, by sundry pinches and pushes, to induce her to obey the will of the elder brother, which was, that she should request Miss Carrington to sing a new and favourite English song, the words of which, Henry Leonard had written in the blank leaf of his pocket Horace.

"I know these lines by heart," said Geraldine, "and I have

often sung them to their appropriate air, but my heart goes not with them."

"Is that possible?" cried Henry. "Oh! do sing them, and you will recover your enthusiasm."

"What are the lines?" said the General, taking the book, and rapidly glancing through them; "Geraldine, these are beautiful, and you can, beyond any one I know, give them their due force and expression. Tune yourself, then," added he, "as well as your instrument."

Geraldine complied, and whether from obedience or recovered enthusiasm, gave forth the words of the following song, with all the mingled pathos and energy they demanded.

"Rome! Rome! thou art no more
As thou hast been,
On thy seven hills of yore
Thou sat'st a queen.
Thou had'st thy triumphs then
Peopling thy street,
Princes and scepter'd men
Bowed at thy feet.

"Rome; thine imperial brow
Never shall rise!
What hast thou left thee now?
Thou hast thy skies;
Thou hast the sunset's glow,
Rome, for thy dower,
Flashing dark cypress bough,
Temple and tower.
Rome! Rome! thou art no more
As thou hast been!"*

When the song had ceased, and while the heartfelt plaudits of her auditors were given, Geraldine remained in melancholy thought, leaning on her guitar; at length roused by the inquiry, "Why had she objected to the song?" she raised her head, and the whole expression of her countenance was seen to change from pensive regret to the fire of enthusiasm.

"Who dare say," cried she, "that Rome is no more! that she has nothing left her but her skies! Falsely sang she who penned that lay, who wilfully forgot the martyrs' blood,—the apostles' hallowed tomb! Were there no triumphs peopling her streets, when consecrated bands chanted in solemn tone the deprecatory Kyrie Eleison, and the plague was stayed? When o'er the castle, which now bears a commemorative name, an angel

hovered sheathing his sword, while the celestial choir was heard to sing the resurrection hymn of Christian Rome! Are there no triumphs peopling her streets, when it is hither that the tribes come up, the tribes of the Lord, to adore, in the temple of the mighty God,—the Lord God of Hosts? Has He not planted here His Church, and given to this nation, chosen to foster her, genius withheld from Palestine, that his bride may be adorned with every grace and ornament fit for her espousals! Has He not said of the nations, by the mouth of his Christian prophet, ‘Behold I will make them to come and adore before thy feet, and they shall know that I have loved thee?’ Rome! thou canst never die! In thee is fixed the mystic ladder, whose top is shrouded by the wings of angels, and the incense of celestial thuribles. Rome! thou canst never die! Both night and day are heard in solemn chant the praises of thy God. Rome! thou canst never die! Thy faith shall save thee, with thy hope, till merged in the new Jerusalem, thou shalt prove indeed the eternal city, glowing with charity, for ever in the heavens!”

Geraldine, while her spirit had been carried on to bear testimony of the high position of the Christian Queen of the seven hills, the spiritual mistress of the world, had unconsciously arisen, and as unconsciously had her eyes met and fixed on those of her father, who, after an amazed and troubled glance, had bent his on the ground: nor did he raise them till some instants after the deep silence which had succeeded this burst of indignant fervor, when, nearly behind his daughter, in the entrance of the apartment, calm, mild, and benignant, stood the venerable and venerated Cardinal W—. “Your Eminence is ever welcome!” cried the General, bending his knee, and kissing the ring, consecrated by relics, usually worn by cardinals.

CHAPTER II.

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

Hamlet.

"GERALDINE," said her father, on the following morning, "were you aware of the entrance of the Cardinal last night?"

"Indeed I was not," she replied, "but great was my joy at seeing him, for he is a holy man!"

"I believe he is," said the General; "at any rate he is a Cardinal, and his presence put to flight all those idlers, who had flocked round you, and to whom you were playing the improvisatrice, that is, you were playing the fool. It was a fortunate thing for you, child," added he, "that your audience changed from Protestant to Catholic, and that your wild ardour has created an interest for you in the breast of his Eminence, for you had been acting in defiance of all caution, 'di mal in peggio,' ever since you kissed the cross in the Coliseum. What could induce you to be so incautious before those Protestants?"

"I did not expect to be observed," said Geraldine, "but to own the truth, I thought only of gaining the indulgence."

"You could very well have substituted for that devotion, some other good work," replied the General; "for instance, there are short prayers and aspirations to which indulgences have been granted. I should much prefer your saying these quietly, to any appearance of parade and ostentation, and I hope you will remember this, when absent from me. The Cardinal's amiable relative, the Contessa C—, is much interested in you, and has kindly offered, not only to conduct you over Catholic Rome, but also to supply to you in every respect possible, the place of your mutual friend Lady Winefride Blount. Now let me hear of no more enthusiastic fits."

"Are you not to be yourself my guide, as you have hitherto been, dear Padrino?" said Geraldine.

"I will escort you wherever the Contessa thinks my presence necessary," replied the General, "but I have been over these

churches, and palaces, and studios so often, that unless you make a point of it, I would rather be excused."

Geraldine's heart swelled and her eyes filled with tears.

"Now why is this?" said the General. "What is it that pains you?" Our heroine's feelings were too undefined for her to reply. "Well, well," added he, "I will go with you. But let me tell you, Geraldine," as she sprang to him with renewed smiles and caresses, "you are a completely spoiled child!"

Several families of the English Catholic nobility and gentry, were in Rome, during the residence there of General Carrington and his daughter, and they soon became known to all. The pious and affectionate heart of the Contessa C— had warmed towards our heroine from their first meeting, and a friendship ensued, as advantageous to Geraldine, as it was interesting to her elder friend. Our heroine's visits over modern Rome, were from this time under Catholic auspices, and treading thus on holy ground, with those, who, in the highest purest feelings, were congenial to her, she forgot she had ever wept or doubted, except when the past was, in gratitude, called to enhance the present.

With her new friend, and escorted either by General Carrington, or some Catholic Priest, Geraldine successively attended the holy sacrifice of the mass, and then viewed the monuments and relics of the seven basilica, of which she had hitherto seen only St Peter's. During these visits, they frequently came in contact with the mere sight-seeing parties of English, whose presence could not fail to be distinguished, by their Protestant disregard of holy places and ceremonies. But if amongst the many strangers, Geraldine saw a face she knew, it was easy to avoid any formal recognition, and she received but little personal annoyance from any of her countrymen or women, except the determined champion of pagan times, Mr Ellis, who seemed as if determined, or destined, to be met, wherever she might bend her steps; and with his sketch, or note-book in his hand, to remain within listening distance of all she said. This was the more vexatious, as it always involved the disappearance of General Carrington from her side, but the annoyance proceeded no farther, till one day, waiting on the steps of St John Lateran, a little apart from her friends, who were busily engaged in some change of plans for the morning, Mr Ellis took the long intended opportunity of addressing her. "Miss Carrington," said he,

"I pity you! You are now able to compare the past with the present, and the struggle in your mind must be great, to preserve truth, and yet not risk the imputation of contempt towards this upstart city. Yours is not the mind to be dazzled and cajoled by all the tinsel and parade of priestcraft: and in spite of the ardour with which some weeks ago you cast the halo of your own genius and devotion over these monuments of degradation, you must now perceive that sad and wide is the contrast between Pagan and Papal Rome!"

"I cannot imagine," said Geraldine, smiling, "why Protestants ever visit, still less why they revisit, modern Rome; and I must recur to the enigma on seeing you, for the second time, in this portico of a Christian temple."

"I am here," said Mr Ellis, "because I am aware of some omissions in the first edition of my work; and as the second edition is soon to appear, I am revisiting these basilica, where so many interesting remains of antiquity have been covered or defaced by pious moderns. I hope your friends will not omit to show you, if they have not done so already, the four ancient columns of gilt bronze, made during the reign of Augustus, from the 'rostra' of the conquered vessels at Actium: but, perhaps, the remembrance of Cæsar, Mark Anthony, and Cleopatra, would be sacrilege and treason, within view of the 'Santa Scala.'"

"You are right," said Geraldine, "I might have looked with curiosity and interest at these remains of pagan antiquity, had they been elsewhere, but how remember them, when about to view the steps which the sacred feet of Jesus Christ descended from the judgment-hall of Pilate?"

"I wish you joy in believing all these monkish legends," said Mr Ellis.

"What you offer me in mockery, I accept in earnest," said Geraldine. "I do feel joy in my belief; a joy, far beyond all that your learned researches and brilliant reputation can ever bring you."

"I believe you," said Mr Ellis, with a smile, in which regret and bitterness were mingled; "and perhaps I do ill to destroy a delusion which makes you happy, by asking you, how is it possible, that this staircase should, in the first place, have escaped the total destruction of Jerusalem; in the next, have remained for centuries in obscurity, and at length have been

discovered by Sixtus V, and set up for the adoration of the faithful?"

"Veneration, not adoration," said Geraldine. "And now let me ask you, how is it possible that these gilt bronze columns, even if ascertained to have been formed from the rostra of the ships at Actium, should have escaped the sacking and pillage of all the hordes which desolated Rome, when, although these barbarians could not appreciate the value of the matchless works of art which they destroyed, they yet fully understood the worth of metal; and if unseen or disregarded by former ravagers, how came they to escape when the city was laid in ashes by Alaric? Now, spare yourself the trouble," continued she, "of giving me proofs of the authenticity of these columns, for I believe that their history can be traced in a manner satisfactory to wiser heads than mine; but if I give historical belief to the authenticity of one relic of antiquity, why not do so from authentic records in the other case? Why not conclude that, as the judgments which fell on Jerusalem were suspended during forty years, the Christians were on the constant watch, during that period, to secure all the relics possible of their divine and beloved Master, and that returning from Pella, after the siege, when terror and confusion reigned, they secured and concealed these precious steps?"

"I do not pretend," said Mr Ellis, "to enter the list with you, Miss Carrington, because I merely pretend to human assistance, whereas, when this fails you, the supernatural is always at hand, as it was with that very clever and active old lady, the Empress Helena."

"Remember," said Geraldine, "that the supernatural aid given to the Empress Helena, when she secured and brought from Jerusalem the true cross, the sacred steps, and other relics, rests on historical evidence, so authentic, that it can no more be doubted, than that the symbol of our faith appeared to Constantine, her son, on the eve of that battle which, in its event, gave peace to the Christian world."

"I believe one, as much as the other," said Mr Ellis.

"You will reject neither," said Geraldine, "if you will permit the powers of your mind to investigate and decide, without the interference of the will which is biassed, and taking the lead, carries by all force, not argument."

Here Geraldine was borne off by her friends, but not to the

'Santa Scala,' as she had expected, for that sight was reserved for a day of peculiar devotion, when pilgrims would be seen ascending the steps in penitential prayer; and, accordingly, Geraldine did thus visit it, some months after, with the deepest feelings of commemorative interest, when, although bound by a promise to her father not to indulge in any demonstration of her pious enthusiasm, she watched the train of "blessed mourners," and remembered the promise to those who thus mourn, "that they shall be comforted."

With the churches of Saint Clement and Saint Agnes, terminated the sight-seeing for the present, and Geraldine's visits to the basilica and other temples of divine worship, were, from this time, solely from devotion. The season of Advent had arrived, and the calm solemnity of the city became more established during these weeks of preparation, for the glorious burst of joy at Christmas. Amongst the English Catholics all gay assemblies were over; but on the Sunday evenings a few friends still met in the apartments of the Contessa C——, and amongst them General Carrington and his daughter, the latter pondering over her reluctance to make this change from Protestant to Catholic observance of the sabbath.

"Sunday is a day of joy to both Protestant and Catholic," said she to her father, "and Advent should be with each a time of serious thought, at the close of the natural, and opening of the ecclesiastical, year, as well as of preparation for the festival of Christmas. There are fervent and pious hearts of each denomination now in Rome, and yet how will they misjudge and condemn each other! The Protestants will forget, or will give no proof that they remember, this to be a season of penitential retrospect and sedulous preparation. On Christmas-eve, it is true they will think of the morrow with grateful happy feelings, as the festival which, excepting that of the Resurrection, they feel to be the most joyous of the year; but previously to this all will have gone on as usual, and they will never be able to understand the tribute which Catholics pay to the holiday of Sunday, by relaxing from the austerities of the week, by a little social, though private, intercourse in the evening, after the morning devotions have been equal to the entire Sunday of any Protestant, however pious."

"Catholics," said the General, "do not drag about their

sleepy devotion after the time appointed by the church, and therefore they are not acting a part they do not feel."

"And yet," said Geraldine, "a Protestant might say that much of the Catholic during these week days in Advent, which, though not so mournful as in Lent, are very solemn."

"They are solemn," said the General, "the Church intends they should be so, and therefore, as you have seen, all the decorations of the altar are covered with the mourning garb of purple, and her children are directed to think of their sins, to repent of them, confess and make satisfaction for them; all which gives them occupation in exact keeping with the penitential season—while on the holy days or Sundays, the commemoration being joyful, and the nature of joy being social, they are called on by the Church to rejoice in her own Catholic and social spirit. If the divine founder of our faith had not intended that our joys should be social, and our penitential hours silent and abstracted, why did he instance feasting, music, and dancing, on occasions of joy, and bid the spiritual mourner enter into his chamber and be still."

"I have experienced," said Geraldine, "the inconsistency and, to a scrupulous conscience, the misery of being taught, that religious joy is antisocial—for the heart contradicts that opinion."

"Let Protestants go through all the austerities and humiliations to which the Catholic Church obliges her children," said the General, "before they attack her Sunday. Let them keep all her fasts before they quarrel with her feasts; and let them explain why the Church has had authority to change the Sabbath of the old law, with no warrant whatever for it from Scripture, and yet has no authority to regulate the hours of the day, and permit the rest from mental as well as manual labour 'after the devotions of the morning.'"

"The meeting of relations on the evening of Sunday is relaxation sufficient, I should think," said Geraldine; "I shall never like to see cards or dancing on the Sunday evening."

"And yet," said the General, "you actually clapped your hands for joy, when on the sudden turn of the road on our journey, just before entering the little town of Tavernello, we beheld the peasants dancing on the other side of the bridge, and a couple of old ecclesiastics looking on, although a little apart."

"It was a beautiful picture," said Geraldine, "and more than that, it made me happy to see others happy, and so it ever will."

"Then your objection to dancing on the Sunday," said the General, "is, I conclude, more from your dread of the previous desecration that would take place, from the preparations thought essential to the entertainments of the great."

"I think you are right, Padrino," said Geraldine; "for although I might like to dance and make merry on the Sunday evening, I could never be reconciled to inducing servants to break the Sabbath by manual labour, which Catholics deprecate as much as Protestants. I have no scruple, however, about these little 'reunions' at the Contessa's, where is neither feasting nor dancing, but a great deal of interesting conversation."

It was on one of these Sunday evenings, in Advent, that Geraldine met, for the first time, her celebrated countryman, the Rev. Dr Wharton, and esteemed herself happy in being a listener to his varied and ever instructive conversation; and, at length, in being invited to speak freely to him on the subject of her own impressions of ancient and modern Rome. Geraldine, as she listened to his profound observations, both as a theologian and an antiquary, almost regretted that her usual shadow, Mr Ellis, was not present, to have started his objections, in presence of an authority to which he must have yielded at least deference. A little reflection, however, made her esteem herself happy to be freed from controversy, and in the peaceful enjoyment of instruction given in all the playful ease of recreation.

On Dr Wharton's mentioning the excavations beneath the city, Geraldine could not but express her regret that she had not been permitted to visit the Catacombs, and asked him whether he supposed them to have been originally destined for places of religious interment.

"The excavations beneath the city," replied Dr Wharton, "were probably formed by supplying sand and other materials for the buildings above, and then put to no farther use by the Pagans, who did not bury, but burnt, their dead, until the reign of Constantine; from which date the Christian mode became so popular, that in the time of Theodosius the younger, there was not a body burned in Rome."

"But how is it ascertained," said Geraldine, "that the Christians alone deposited their dead within these caverns, and that from the time when the Pagans imitated their decent inter-

ment of the dead, the Catacombs did not receive the bodies of Pagans as well as Christians, so that we may be led into venerating as relics of Christian martyrs the remains of idolaters?"

"The Christian crypts," replied Dr Wharton, "which are dug in the earth to a great extent, are known by the emblems and inscriptions found on the door of entrance, and also by the testimony of ancient Christian writers: amongst the rest, Saint Jerome relates, that when a boy and student at Rome, he was accustomed on Sundays to go into these crypts, which were lined on each side with the bodies of the Christian dead, and to make the round of the sepulchres of the apostles and martyrs. The Christian emblems and inscriptions placed in the Catacombs are frequently the monogram of Christ's name in a cross, a carved or painted figure of a lamb, often having a cross on its head,—the shepherd carrying the lost sheep,—the stag thirsting after the fountains of water,—and others; for instance, the olive or palm branch, the dove, the vihe, the anchor. The first I have mentioned are the only symbols which are received as undoubtedly Christian, for these latter, although denoting certain virtues, are no proof of Christian martyrdom, or sanctity, and when discovered are decently re-interred without farther honour from the faithful. Those relics," continued Dr Wharton, "which bear on the coffin the name of the martyr, hold the first rank; next to these are esteemed the relics to which are affixed the symbols of martyrdom, together with the Christian emblems."

Just as Dr Wharton finished speaking, Geraldine distinguished the voice of Mr Ellis engaged in a laughing dialogue with an old Italian priest, who spoke admirable English, and who was generally to be found amongst the English Catholics in their private 'reunions.'

"But, my dear good Abate," said Mr Ellis, at length able to articulate, after a fit of continued laughter, "how can you give me a satisfactory account of the two heads of Saint John Baptist, and the—I know not how many thumbs of Saint John the Evangelist, all and each performing miracles? Now, the false head and the false thumbs have no right to work miracles, yet their seats are quite equal to those of the true relics, so that we require, as in the judgment of Solomon, to be decided by nature, and see the baptist and evangelist claim their own property, before we can believe in either the relics, or the miracles. Perhaps," added he, "you are not aware that English Protestants,

in their tours round the Catholic Continent, are shown these duplicates and triplicates of holy relics !”

“ Yes,” said the Abate, “ I have before heard of these two heads of saints, but from Protestant travellers only, each supposed by its respective possessors to be the head of Saint John the baptist. Of course, supposing the account correct, one cannot be, and neither may be, the relic of that saint. But it is certain, that to whatever saints these relics belong, God has given power, through the intercession of Saint John the baptist, to cure diseases, and work other miracles, by means of these relics. The miraculous cures are certain. What matters then the uncertainty as to which, if either, of the heads belonged to Saint John the baptist, since both are blessed by God. The same may be said of the supposed relics of Saint John the evangelist.”

“ Most true,” added Dr Wharton to Geraldine, “ as I have just been telling you, there are many relics which are known, from the emblems on the coffins, to be those of martyrs, but to which of the martyrs they belong, we know not. These relics then receive the name of some saint ; but hold only the second rank in the veneration of the faithful.”

“ But, Sir,” said Mr Ellis approaching, “ you must excuse me for doubting that St John would take the trouble of performing wonders with any other head than his own, for which we may suppose him to retain some partiality ; and I still more question the real owner of the head exerting himself to play those pious pranks, since all the renown and all the homage goes to another.”

“ Sir,” replied Dr Wharton, smiling, “ this love of homage and renown, however much it existed amongst the fabled heroes and gods of antiquity, has no place in the communion of saints. That God may be glorified is their sole aim, and the real and supposed owner of the relics are equally interested in promoting that glory, by whatever means He shall in His hidden wisdom appoint.”

“ I have a precious relic, Sir,” said the Abate to Mr Ellis, “ which, I think, from your love of antiquity, you will prize ; the relic of her in whom the blood of the Scipios, the Gracchi, and Paulus Emilius, was centred, through her mother, while, from her father, she was descended from Agamemnon, and married, as became such parentage, the descendant of Eneas.”

“ Indeed !” said Mr Ellis, “ here is a classical pedigree sufficient for the ambition of any high-born heroine, be she Greek or Roman.”

The Abate now drew forth a little case enclosing a silver reliquary, which contained the relic so precious to him ; he would not, however, permit it to be touched by the hands of the scoffer - as he good-humouredly though seriously called him, but gave him the long account from the paper which enveloped it, of its authenticity, which, in honour of so many illustrious names, Mr Ellis felt interested to read, and to which was affixed the seal of the pontiff. The Abate now placed the relic in the hand of our heroine, inquiring whether she had yet read the life of St Paula, the spiritual daughter of the great St Jerome ?

Geraldine remembered that St Paula had been the spiritual pupil of St Jerome, and had passed all her latter years amid the scenes of our blessed Saviour's life on earth, and had finally fixed at Bethlehem, where she died. The date of this saint's career had also interested Geraldine, from its being in those primitive times in the Christian Church, which Protestants, as well as Catholics, term " holy," and also, from St Paula having been amongst those Christians who had left Pagan Rome before the judgments denounced by St John had fallen upon that city, " Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her plagues," had been obeyed literally as well as spiritually, by crowds of voluntary exiles from Rome ; while those of the Christians who remained, found safety within the two Christian churches, which were, by a miraculous movement of mercy, respected as sanctuaries by the barbarous conqueror.

Geraldine related what she knew of the saint, whose relic she held, but she had forgotten the earlier part of her life, and, although she was correct with respect to the time of St Paula's leaving Rome, it did not appear that she was repelled from the city on account of the approaching calamities, but, that she desired a separation from all she so tenderly loved by ties of nature, that she might live for God alone. The Abate described, with pious enthusiasm, the progress of divine grace in the heart of this illustrious lady, first, moving her to doubt of the grandeur and luxury she had enjoyed, as innocent and becoming her station ; next, removing her beloved husband and daughter by death, and at length, attracting her from those dear objects who remained, by the superior force of divine love.

Geraldine promised to read the life of this saint ; and the Abate promised, on his part, that if she felt sufficiently inspired by it

to take St Paula for her patroness and model, when she left Rome, he would give her his precious relic.

Geraldine, after this evening, which was the last 'reunion' of the season, did not see the Abate again till after the joyful commemorations of Christmas and the Epiphany. She then claimed the relic; and after a due investigation of her right to become its possessor, the Abate presented it with only one farther stipulation, that should she ever become a nun, she would take the name of "Paula."

"I am not yet sufficiently detached from creatures, and I have not yet seen enough of this beautiful, though fallen earth, to become a nun," said Geraldine, as she recalled the passing wish for that life, with which Angela de Grey had inspired her, but which had vanished at the sight of her father, and had never returned to molest her present happiness.

"Almighty God may yet call you to be wholly his," said the Abate, "and if so, be thou faithful."

CHAPTER III.

What sudden blaze of song
 Spreads o'er th' expanse of heav'n?
 In waves of light it thrills along,
 Th' angelic signal given;
 "Glory to God," from yonder central fire,
 Flows out the echoing lay beyond the starry quire.

Like circles widening round,
 Upon a clear blue river,
 Orb alter orb, the wond'rous sound
 Is echoed on for ever;
 "Glory to God on high, on earth be peace
 And love to men of love—salvation and release."

Keble.

CHRISTMAS Eve in a Catholic church was well calculated to inspire our heroine with the tenderest sentiments of devotion. She would not permit a single regret, or it would have arisen at

being obliged to kneel in a tribune, instead of being amongst the poor on such a night, when, rejected from the inn, the blessed Mary, in cold and poverty, gave to the world its Saviour in the rude stable of Bethlehem. It was the first time she had ever known of the three Christmas Masses,—the first at midnight, in honour of Christ's temporal birth from His sacred mother; the second, in honour of His spiritual birth in the hearts of His Elect; and the third, in honour of His future Advent in glory.*

The first mass Geraldine heard and offered in preparation for holy communion, which, with her father she received at the second mass, the third was offered in thanksgiving. It was the first time also, that she had ever received the blessed sacrament with her beloved father, and joy of the holiest filial nature swelled her heart, and drew the silent tears down her cheek. This joy of her heart continued during a considerable time, to banish some vague but painful feelings, which had begun to take a more decided place in her mind, and of which the renewed sociabilities of the season, afforded a recurrence. Geraldine all but idolized her father, and much that was flattering to the human heart, was engaged in this devotion. She was proud of his martial air, his noble bearing, his rare but speaking smile, and the varied charms of his conversation. She also knew that she was the one object of his care and love; and that had she not been his daughter, he would still have given her his approbation. In truth, General Carrington was equally proud, as fond of his brilliant yet tender child, and this had seemed to be strengthened by the circumstance which had threatened to weaken, if not destroy it, her becoming a Catholic. In the Catholic society, which they now enjoyed in Rome, the ardour of her religious feelings, and the previous learned investigation which authorized them, were spoken of by him, within her hearing, either with encomium, or with a smiling rebuke, which would invite the praise of others; and she could scarcely comprehend how he could desire, that from being the interesting convert to the one only Church, caressed and applauded in the circle of Catholics at the soirées of the Contessa C——, she was, the same night, at the later parties of the Protestant leaders of the English fashionables, strictly to keep the secret of her conversion. In any other city, it would perhaps have been rare that the subject of religion should have been in-

* This is according to St Bernard, but not exactly following the arrangement of the missal, the subject being of pious feeling merely, and not of precept.

troduced into parties, formed merely for relaxation and amusement. But at Rome, the Church is everything; and the idle and frivolous, having no other topic of conversation, must talk nonsense about things awful and mysterious. "His mind, then," thought Geraldine, "the mind I have believed expanded to every noble and generous thought, can it be sullied and contracted by that false system of expediency, which confounds truth with falsehood? She dared not investigate farther, but as we have said, preferred to dwell on the holy night of Christmas, and the reassurance then given to her heart.

From Christmas until Lent, the social gaiety continued. The Leonard family were still in Rome, and, notwithstanding the little congeniality which existed on the most important points, there were motives to induce, not only intimacy, but friendship. General Carrington, and Colonel Leonard, had, in early life, been really attached to each other, and naturally desired that their families should cordially unite: scarce a week passed without their meeting, and the wonders of Rome were of course, the most obvious topics of conversation, but which were rendered as hazardous as obvious from the sarcastic vein of the young Charles and his sister, and the indignant spirit of our heroine.

The aged Mrs Leonard, however, from possessing more experience, and more humility, was less prone to ridicule all that she did not understand. The kind partiality that she felt for Geraldine, induced her to listen with attention to the explanations our heroine was ever willing to give.

It was on the morning of the 17th of January, the festival of Saint Anthony, that the latter had to sustain an attack, in which she was thankful to receive assistance from her friend the Abate.

"Oh! my dear Miss Carrington," cried Miss Leonard, "we have just returned from the blessing of the horses, in the name of Saint Anthony! You never witnessed anything so absurd. There were the poor animals, dressed out with ribbons, and finery of all kinds; and not only horses, but cattle of all descriptions: and there stood the poor monk, with an immense bucket of holy water near him, into which he was constantly plunging his brush, and then sprinkling and blessing till he was quite exhausted, with his little skull-cap off and on every instant: I would have given anything if you had been there!"

"I was there," said Geraldine, "and though you did not see our party, we saw yours behaving with great indecorum."

"Oh!" cried Augusta Leonard, throwing herself on the sofa, with fresh bursts of laughter, in which her brother joined, "who can forbear laughing at such folly?"

"It appears to me," said Geraldine, "that the greatest folly is this constant repetition of surprise at the consistent faith of the Church."

"But what good did all the blessing and sprinkling do the cattle, and their owners," said Miss Leonard, "when they left the good monk just as vicious and distempered, as when they came to him?"

"That is indeed begging the question," said Geraldine; "I do not believe that the cattle were so much so after the blessing as before. Do you remember the prayers we read together the other day,—on the ceremony of blessing the element of water?"

"I do not remember much about them," said Miss Leonard.

"It is unfortunate," said Geraldine, "that your memory should not serve you better, when you cast ridicule on others. You are so much accustomed to hear the words of the royal prophet, and of the three holy children, calling on things animate and inanimate to bless and extol their Creator, that you are not struck by it: but how much more incomprehensible is it to call on 'beasts and cattle to bless God,' than for God to bless them? The same may be said of fire, air, earth and water, and all that are called upon to bless Him, who made them, and pronounced them good. And how can you say that the priest blessed the cattle in the name of St Anthony, when you are quite acquainted with the invocation to the Holy Trinity in Latin, and your expert knowledge of Italian must have guided you to the rest; repeated as it was so often, it was impossible not to learn and retain the priest's blessing. '*Per intercessionem Beati Antonii Abatis, hæc animalia liberantur a malis, in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.*' 'Through the intercession of the blessed Abbot Anthony, may these animals be delivered from evil, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.'"

"My dear," said Mrs Leonard, "read me the prayers used by the Roman Catholic church for blessing the water. Do they mean to give a sort of inferior baptism to the animals, and cast out from them the curse entailed on these inoffensive creatures by man's transgression? If so, I can enter much more into the

ceremony, I shall be better able to judge, however, after listening to you."

Geraldine fetched the Rev. Dr Challoner's "Instructions on the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church," and read the form used for holy water.

"The priest having signed himself with the sign of the cross, saying, 'Our help is in the name of the Lord,' the reply being, 'Who made heaven and earth, proceeds to the blessing of the salt, which is to be mingled with the water, saying,—

"I exorcise thee, O creature of salt, by the living † God, by the true † God, by the holy † God: by that God, who, by the prophet Elisha, commanded thee to be cast into the water to cure its barrenness, that thou mayest by this exorcism be made beneficial to the faithful, and become to all them who make use of thee, healthful both to soul and body: and, that in what place soever thou shalt be sprinkled, all illusions and wickedness and crafty wiles of Satan may be chased away, and depart, from that place: and every unclean spirit commanded in His name, who is to come to judge the living and the dead, and the world by fire. Amen.'"

"My dear," said Mrs Leonard, "from what I understand of exorcism, this agrees perfectly with my notion, that the curse entailed by Adam's fall on all creatures, requires to be removed before they can be 'good,' as God made them, and pronounced them to be."

"Yes," said Geraldine, "for is not exorcism the casting-out of evil spirits? and is not the permission of their evil agency the curse given on earth? I cannot presume to speak decidedly, but it seems to me, that I see clearly how the evil spirit has diffused itself over every thing, and must be cast out. Still, that would not be sufficient; the creature is then, it is true, no longer the conductor of evil, but, being merely harmless, cannot convey and direct blessing, unless the especial grace of God be diffused into it, and therefore, after the exorcism, the following prayer is used.

"O Almighty and everlasting God, we most humbly implore thy infinite mercy, that thou wouldst vouchsafe by thy goodness to bless † and sanctify this thy creature of salt which thou hast given for the use of mankind: that it may be to all that take it for the health of mind and body, and that whatever shall be touched or sprinkled by it, may be freed from all impurity,

and from all assaults of wicked spirits, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.'"

"I conclude, my dear," said the venerable lady, that "this previous blessing of the salt is necessary before it is put into the water, but why cannot the simple element suffice?"

"Indeed I do not know," said Geraldine; "but is not salt frequently spoken of in Scripture, literally as well as mystically, as preserving from corruption? Our daily experience proves the former, and would enable the faithful to lay up a store of it; while, in its mystical sense, it was employed by the prophet Elisha, by the command of God, as we have just read. After this," continued Geraldine, "the priest proceeds to the blessing of the water, first exorcising it thus:—

" 'I exorcise thee, O creature of water, in the name of God + the Father Almighty, and in the name of Jesus Christ + his Son, our Lord, and in the virtue of the Holy + Ghost: that thou mayest by this exorcism have power to chase away all the power of the enemy: that thou mayest be enabled to cast him out, and put him to flight, with all his apostate angels, by the virtue of the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who is to come to judge the living, and the dead, and the world by fire. Amen.'

"Then follows the prayer.

" 'O God, who for the benefit of mankind hast made use of the element of water in the greatest sacraments, mercifully hear our prayers, and impart the virtue of thy blessing + to this element, prepared by many kinds of purifications; that this thy creature, made use of in thy mysteries, may receive the effect of thy divine grace for the chasing away devils, and curing diseases: and that whatsoever shall be sprinkled with this water in the houses or places of the faithful, may be free from all impurity, and delivered from evil: let no pestilential spirit reside there: no infectious air: let all the snares of the hidden enemy fly away: and may whatever move the safety or repose of the inhabitants of that place be put to flight by the sprinkling of this water, that the welfare which we seek by the invocation of thy holy name, may be defended from all sorts of assaults. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c. Amen.'

"Then the Priest mingles the salt with the water, saying, 'May this salt and this water be mingled together, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy + Ghost. Amen.'

‘The Lord be with you.’

‘And with thy spirit.’

‘Let us pray.’

“ ‘O God, the author of invincible power, king of an empire that cannot be overcome, and for ever magnificently triumphant; who restrainest the forces of the adversary, who defeated the fury of the roaring enemy, who mightily conquerest his malicious wiles: we pray and beseech thee, O Lord, with dread and humility, to regard with favourable countenance this creature of salt and water, to enlighten it with thy bounty, and to sanctify it with the dew of thy fatherly goodness; that wheresoever it shall be sprinkled, all infestation of the unclean spirit may depart, and all fear of the venomous serpent may be chased away, through the invocation of thy holy name; and that the presence of the Holy Ghost may be everywhere with us, who seek thy mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.’ ”

“ ‘The blessing being ended, the priest sprinkles himself and the people with this water, saying, ‘Thou shalt sprinkle me, O Lord, with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed; thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow.’ ‘The whole psalm ‘Miserere’ is then said: ‘Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy!’ &c. followed by the ‘Gloria Patri,’ and the repetition of the anthem, ‘Thou shalt sprinkle.’ Then returning to the altar, he says,—

V. ‘O Lord show us thy mercy.’

A. ‘And grant us thy salvation.’

V. ‘O Lord hear my prayer.’

A. ‘And let my cry come unto thee.’

V. ‘The Lord be with you.’

A. ‘And with thy spirit.’

‘Let us pray.’

“ ‘Hear us, O Holy Lord, Almighty Father, everlasting God, and vouchsafe to send thy holy angel from heaven, to guard, cherish, protect, visit, and defend, all that dwell in this habitation. Amen.’ ”

Just as our heroine finished reading the last prayer, Miss Leonard, who had retired from weariness, into a farther room with her young brother, joined them again, on hearing the Abate Zaccaria announced; but her grandmother stopped her pleasantries, and informed her, that she saw no absurdity, nor superstition, in blessing cattle, houses, fire, water, or anything

used by man especially: and both she and Geraldine appealed to the Abate to authorize this belief, if it were with a view to remove from them the curse on all creation. The Abate, nodding assent to this remark of Geraldine, here observed,—“The religious policy of our Holy Church, is to induce its members to mix up, with every business and occupation of life, the remembrance of the end for which they and all creatures were formed. Hence the pious Catholic hails these ceremonies, these blessings and thanksgivings over creatures, as mementos of the goodness of the God who gave them as aids to that spirit of inward recollection, that he is constantly striving to keep up, and as lessons of the use for which they were designed; bearing in mind the words of St Paul, ‘For every creature is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.’”*

“Pray, Abate,” cried Charles Leonard, “has the present Pope made many saints? Is he as fond of dubbing his knights spiritual, as our good king his knights temporal, God bless him?”

“I have been told,” said the Abate smiling, “that Protestants suppose us to believe, that the Pope can, by certain pious ceremonies, make a saint out of a sinner, and that the canonization of a saint is the act of sending him straight to heaven.”

“And what does it mean?” said Mrs Leonard.

“The process of canonization,” said the Abate, “is the collecting from witnesses, proofs of holiness of life, and miraculous gifts, sufficient to authorize the belief that God has wrought the perfect sanctity of his servant, and received him into glory. It has caused the admiration and surprise of many learned Protestants, to witness the caution and rigour, with which these testimonies are examined. But that which, after the most laborious and rigorous examination, with continued prayer for the light of the Holy Spirit, is pronounced on by the Church tardily, and at long intervals, is decided at once with careless benevolence in the Protestant community. All who are not flagrant sinners go straight to heaven, all enter immediately into glory, all therefore are saints.”

After this day, our heroine had no prolonged discussions with any one during the gay season of the Carnival, and only some skirmishes occurred between herself and her Protestant friends, at the numerous parties given by the English residents. In

these scenes Geraldine was for a while amused, but her former uneasiness again stole over her, although she would not own to herself that she had any cause for it, beyond her own too fondly engrossed affection for her father ; till at length, a circumstance occurred by which it became evident to her, that he demanded a policy in her conduct which jarred against the open rectitude of her mind. In fact, General Carrington possessed that disposition which was the most calculated to mislead for a while, and then deeply wound, the confiding, but inflexibly upright Geraldine. The grandeur of his speculations, the loftiness of his abstract decisions, the magnanimity of his theories, would make her heart expand with joy and gratitude, at the congeniality there existed between them ; while the whispered confidential sentiments of timid policy—of expediency—of tricking a world that deserved no better—of flattering a fool that you might gain him—of keeping a friend as long as he was useful—and many other expressions which dropped from him at times when less on his guard, Geraldine received as a jest, or to raise some little amicable skirmish, in which he should prove her sentiments ; and it was not until repeated proofs had been given her, that she opened her eyes to the want of moral courage, which had produced, as it ever must, a want of moral integrity, in the character of her father.

And who can describe the desolation of Geraldine's heart, when it was forced to yield to the stern conviction of her understanding—when, after shrinking from the truth, it forced its imperative way—when she at length weighed his character in the balance, and it was found wanting ! Some hours passed of blank unmingled anguish, apart from any thought of herself ; but then arose the question of filial obedience for the future. " I cannot deceive, even for his sake ; I cannot compromise the truth,—but am I then destined to stand alone ? " thought she. " Is the beautiful, the feminine, the humble virtue of obedience, which I have hitherto loved to exercise towards him, is that to be rendered a thing of doubt, of caution, of deliberate choice ? Am I to be once more the independent Geraldine ? Yes, be it so ! for, after long metaphysical inquiries, we must all return to the simple rudiments of our faith,—a Catholic child is taught in its early catechism, " to obey its parents in all that is not sin." Our primary duty is towards God—and God is truth.

That evening, Geraldine accor named her father to a fête

given by the celebrated Italian banker, Torloni, where the company was almost entirely composed of English. Our heroine was pale and grave, but her father appeared to be entirely engrossed by the expected appointment, of which he had been long solicitous, to the — Islands. He read aloud, while in the carriage, part of a letter from his friend Sir — — just received, through the English Ambassador's bag, giving all but a final answer, and added, as they ascended the staircase of the Conte Torloni's brilliantly illuminated palazzo, "Geraldine, you will see several of the English military to-night, and amongst them, General Sir Thomas Oskway, who is spoken of for this very appointment; remember, not a word about religion: let them continue to think me the same General Carrington they knew in Spain, which in truth I am;—a man is not bound to be the public crier of his private opinions. Do you hear me, Geraldine?"

"I do, papa," replied she. But she was not required to make any comment on what she heard, for they were now greeted in the first saloon of reception by the kind Contessa, who had taken care to arrive early; and the General, after many grateful acknowledgments, left his daughter to her charge.

This was the last party our heroine was compelled to attend; and from this time, till the season of Lent, General Carrington took his evening's amusement independently of her. Geraldine having obtained this favour, redoubled her endeavours to make her father's home agreeable to him, and it was not until the Shrove Tuesday that anything occurred to wound her afresh.

On that evening they entertained a large party; Geraldine tried to be happy, and certainly appeared so; all was calculated to please the heart that had not known better and dearer joys; but such was no longer the heart of Geraldine. At length the company dispersed, with the exception of a few Protestant English, and the night closed with much sportive anticipation of the "Papal shows" of Easter, and an especial display of wit on the subject of the Blessed Virgin and the saints, during which the General smiled, and our heroine, finding that she dared not explain or defend her faith, left the room, and retired to rest. In doing this she not only believed herself to be acting with discretion and prudence, but that her father would greatly applaud her; however, on the following day, after the solemn service of Ash Wednesday, when the private hours of penitential devotion

were over, and the one permitted repast had been taken, General Carrington reproved her for giving way to her feelings before Protestants; assuring her that the best plan was to let them say and do exactly as they pleased; that their folly could injure neither our Blessed Lady, nor the rest of the saints: "besides," added he, "I had my own reasons for wishing them to believe us to be like themselves, and so I still wish, if it be possible, till the affair of the islands be settled. And for this reason, if Lady or Miss Oskway call on you during Lent, receive them cheerfully, and as one of themselves, and throw in your little jokes about miracles and relics of saints; they are innocent enough; a person may be a good Catholic without believing in any of these things. Will you do so, Geraldine?"

"For your sake, papa," said she, "I will not mention that you are a Catholic, and I will not, unless I am asked, say that I am one."

"But this is not enough," said the General.

"It is too much!" cried Geraldine, in one of her bursts of long-repressed emotion. "Did you imagine that in becoming a Catholic all the moral qualities of my character, and all the powers of my soul and intellect, would not become Catholic also? Did you hope to see me doubting, fearing, cringing, prevaricating before scoffers, when the glorious privileges of the Church were opened to me? That, enrolled by my baptism and confirmation into the communion of saints, I should admit them only on private occasions, and when secure from intrusion, as worldlings do their poor and shabby relations? If so, you may well be disappointed! English Catholics, of these days of pseudo-liberality, may expect me to forget that Jesus Christ promised his Church that her children should, in his name, and by his power, work miracles even greater than those he had performed while on earth. They may hope that I shall give some ingenious turn to the conversation when these miracles are recounted—but no! Silence is all I can yield to filial obedience. My father will not ask for *more*!"

Geraldine fell on her knees, and the General, who next to Protestant ridicule dreaded a scene, raised her kindly, soothed her with the assurance that he had only spoken in raillery, and a reconciliation was effected.

CHAPTER IV.

Gentiles! with fix'd, yet awful eye,
 Turn ye this page of mystery,
 Nor slight the warning sound;
 Put off thy shoes from off thy feet,
 The place where man his God shall meet,
 Be sure is holy ground!

Hymns for Lent.—Keble.

THE convert to Catholicity is asked, in sincere grief and astonishment, how any mind of real spirituality can adopt a religion so burdened with empty forms as the Catholic Church? But are those forms indeed empty? If so, no rational being would be burdened with them! Once, however, believing firmly that in each outward form is contained the inward spiritual gift, and there can be no torpor, no impatience felt in the external proofs of devotion and love rendered to his God by the fervent Catholic. Once believing truly in the sanctity of holy places, and that the divine blessing and the unseen ministry of the heavenly host do more especially attend the temples of the Deity, it is then no empty form which leads the Catholic to a daily attendance in the house of prayer. Once in the full confidence of faith, believing that in the "daily sacrifice" offered up in commemoration of that once perfected on the cross, and in perpetual acknowledgment that without this our high priest, without this our holy victim, we are cast out, and our God is a consuming fire. Once believing that in this mystery our adorable Redeemer is miraculously present with us, and where, then, is the "empty form," to the pious Catholic, in the sacred service of the mass?

These had been our heroine's replies to the venerable Mrs Leonard, whose concern at her having embraced a religion apparently less vital, pure, and interior than Protestantism, had led her to remonstrate against the change, and endeavour to reclaim her.

"This very temple—this basilic of St Peter's," said Mrs Leonard, "was it not for its erection that Leo X authorized the selling of indulgences, and aroused the mighty Luther? How can you feel ardour and devotion within its walls?"

“I do feel most truly and painfully in connexion with that subject,” replied Geraldine; “for, alas! into what holy work has the enemy of souls not endeavoured to thrust himself, that he might mar the pure offering of man to his Creator? But I must, my dear friend, correct an error, which you, in common with many charitable and pious Protestants, entertain, relying upon Protestant history, apparently trustworthy. The practice of commuting the canonical penances enjoined by the primitive Church, for alms-deeds, had long prevailed. Leo the Tenth granted an indulgence, which, you know, is not a pardon for sins, no more than it is a prospective permission to commit sin, to such as contributed to the erecting of the most magnificent temple ever raised to the honour of the Deity. That there were great and manifold corruptions in the lives of the clergy, and probably in the discipline of the Church, I readily admit, and, that a consequent falling off of piety prevailed among the laity, is proved, by their rapacity in seizing on Church property, and their readiness to embrace systems of faith, which showed a path to Heaven, less beset with restraint and self-denial. I would even admit, although no proof exists of the fact, that the authorized commissioners employed to dispense the indulgences, misrepresented their design and effect, for the sake of profit or influence, thus throwing disgrace on the seat of verity and apostolic descent, by selling, as it were, the spiritual gifts of the Church. And let us grant that it was thus—let us concede, that the warning to God’s ancient people, the Jews, might have been applied to the rulers of His Christian Church. ‘Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear.’ We cannot then wonder, that, when corruption thus prevailed in the Church, reformers should arise to attack those abuses, and in this, I find them fully justified: would that here they had stopped! but, from the abuses, they proceeded to attack the faith of the Church, in which they were not justified. They sacrilegiously put their hand to the ark: and, thus it was, that, as in the revolt against the wilful Rehoboam, a second Jeroboam was permitted to arise, and call aloud, ‘To your tents, O Israel!’ and following this analogy, we cannot but perceive, first, in the instance of rebellion against the kingly power, that, although God permitted this scourge and punishment to befall the anointed king of Judah, yet His spirit accompanied not the ten tribes who revolted; the

Lord of glory was not born amongst them. They are still scattered and hidden, till the day of grace shall gather them in. While, to the two faithful tribes who remained steadfast, were sent the prophets: amongst them the miracles wrought: and, at length was heard, 'Arise! shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee!' Thus may we consider God to have permitted a deserved rebuke and humiliation to His Catholic Church, in the bereavement of the northern nations: the estrangement, contempt, and even hatred, of the 'tribes' who have revolted against her. Yet has her divine spouse not deserted her: with her alone remains the mystery of His real presence: with her alone are His miracles wrought: and to her alone can be applied, 'Behold, I will make thy enemies to come and adore before thy feet, and they shall know that I have loved thee.'

The next explanatory conversation with Mrs Leonard, was on the subject of the side chapels and altars within the great foreign churches; "which," said she, "I cannot but consider to derogate from the respect due to the High Altar dedicated to God, while these little Altars are dedicated only to saints; and it is quite distressing, that enter these Churches when you will, you find some one of these little chapels filled with worshippers, while it is only on rare and great occasions, that God himself is adored at the high altar." As the Abate Zaccaria was present Geraldine turned to him to remove this difficulty, and he smilingly complied, assuring the venerable lady, that these side chapels and altars are as much dedicated to Almighty God alone, as is the high altar, which, equally with them, is placed under the invocation of some Saint, that with united suffrages we may implore the intercession of this favoured servant of God. The high altar is always under the protection of the saint, whose name distinguishes the church. That of St Peter's, for instance, is under the special invocation of that apostle; and, my dear Madam, if you have conquered the difficulty you once felt respecting the so-called dedication of churches to saints, why object to these chapels, oratories and altars? for I repeat with St Augustine, 'We do not erect altars to sacrifice on them to the martyrs, but to the God of the martyrs, and One God.'

During the early part of Lent, Geraldine had been occupied in gleaning from works lent her by the Rev. Dr Wharton, and the Abate Zaccaria, all that could throw light and interest on the

approaching solemn commemorations, and she was therefore now still better enabled to understand and appreciate those attendant ceremonies, which to the superficial observers must be tedious, and to the prejudiced Protestant, mere empty form and idle show.

On the eve of the fifth Sunday in Lent, which is the fortnight before Easter, commenced the commemorative history, or mystical representation of our blessed Redeemer's sufferings. The ornaments in all the Churches were either covered or removed, and the crosses veiled with the mournful and penitential covering of violet.*

In early times the catechumens who had been found worthy, were baptized on the eve of Easter, and admitted, on the glorious day of the resurrection, to the adorable sacrament of the risen body, soul and divinity of Christ. Those also who had been excluded from the blessings of the altar, and compelled to do public penance for public crimes,—the rest of the faithful likewise, who by fasting, prayer, and alms, had sought reconciliation through the sufferings and death of Christ, and expected to be joyful partakers of his resurrection, by the channels of grace he has appointed,—all felt the increased solemnity of the near approach of the awful commemorations.

This first day of Passion week, (which is the week preceding Holy week, and not, as in the Protestant Church, synonymous with it), General Carrington accompanied his daughter to the early mass, as well as to that which he had always attended with her. And this additional devotion he continued during the interval between Passion week and Easter. On Palm Sunday, he accepted, for his daughter and himself, the privileges obtained through Cardinal W—, by which they could see and hear, in a tribune near the high altar of St Peter's, and also in the Sistine or Pope's Chapel, all the ceremonies of the week.

"You are aware, Geraldine," said the General, on their way to the Sistine chapel, at an early hour on Palm Sunday, "that his Holiness is the representative of Christ, as Prophet, Priest, and King, and that while as a temporal prince, he has a court as head of the Church, his court is composed of priests. This is peculiar to Christian Rome. Such a thing was unknown before upon earth."

* The author is principally indebted for the following descriptions to the Right Reverend Dr England's explanations of the ceremonies of the holy week.

"It is," said the Abate Zaccaria, who accompanied them, "more in the order of heaven than earth, that a court should be filled by men consecrated to God. Every thing that Madamizella will see, will be with reference to the union of Priest and Sovereign."

"I think," said the General, "that you have one exception to the levee-room of priests. The Pope's lawyer must be of the laity."

"Yes," said the abate, "but he sanctifies his secular business by the heavenly attribute of mercy, for he and all the papal lawyers furnish gratuitous service for the poor, the prisoners, and those under capital conviction."

They had now arrived at the chapel, where Geraldine felt most grateful that she was not to remain in the crowd of the merely curious English, who, with many jokes, were pushing towards the places allotted to them; but was soon quietly seated in the reserved tribune, with the Contessa and her father, and engaged in reading over in the missal the beautiful service which was to commence within an hour. The object of the ceremony was to commemorate our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, when the multitude received Him with palm-branches, emblematical of victory, and with olive-branches, the type of peace; and a pile of these were on the gospel side of the altar, to be blessed before being distributed, according to the undeviating practice of the Church, to "sanctify by the word of God, and by prayer," everything that her children use in the service of their God. This custom of blessing and distributing the palms, and of forming a procession on Palm Sunday, is of very ancient observance; and was first celebrated in the East, on the same principle which Almighty God himself taught to the Hebrew people on the commemoration of their deliverance from Egypt: "And when thy son shall ask thee to-morrow, saying, what mean these testimonies, and ceremonies, and judgments, which the Lord hath commanded us? then shalt thou say to him: We were bondsmen of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord God brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand, and he wrought signs and wonders, great and very grievous in Egypt, against Pharaoh, and all his house, in our sight; and he brought us from thence that he might bring us in, and give us the land concerning which he swore to our fathers: and the Lord commanded that we should do all

these ordinances, and should fear the Lord our God.* On this principle were all the other commemorative festivals and solemnities of the Jewish Church ; and, therefore, on the same principle has the Christian Church, by virtue of the power given her by Christ, instituted her festivals and solemnities commemorative of His blessed life and death.

The choir of the Sistine chapel now commenced the hosanna of the children of Jerusalem, "Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" The prayer which followed from the altar, besought the grace of God to bring us to the glory of Christ's resurrection ; and the subdeacon then chanted from Exodus the history of the murmurs of the children of Israel after they had left the palm-trees and fountains of Elim—their longing after the flesh-pots of Egypt, where they were in bondage—and the promise which the Lord gave them of manna ; the Church having selected this portion of Scripture, to mark to her children, how, in the midst of God's mercies and favours, in delivering us from the bondage of sin, we are disheartened, and murmur at the loss of the past enjoyment, and would fain return to the slavery of Satan, did not the grace of God sustain us in the desert of this world by the "true manna" which comes from heaven, enabling us to behold His glory. Before the gospel from St Matthew, which was sung by the deacon, recording the triumphal entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem, as the royal descendant of David, and King of the nations, the gradual gives the mournful announcement of the machinations of the chief priests and Pharisees against Him ; and also, by anticipation, three verses from the prayer and agony in the garden. Beautiful and appropriate prayers followed the gospel, during which the blessing, sprinkling, and incensing, of the palms and olive-sprigs, takes place ; and then began the distributing them previous to the procession.

The cardinals first advanced in succession to the throne of the pontiff, kissing the palms as they received them, and the hand of the holy father. They were succeeded by the patriarchs, archbishops, and bishops, wearing their mitres. The mitred abbots of religious orders next advanced, who kissed the foot of the pontiff ; and thus did the vast numbers who succeeded them.

During this distribution, the choir performed the proper an-

* Deut. vi. 20, &c.

thems in plain chant. In some parts, the voices of children uttered the hosannas and blessings of the infant band of Jerusalem ; and this unexpected and touching admission of those " babes, in whose mouth God hath perfected his praise," was truly in accordance with the blessed spirit of Catholic communion.

As the procession began, Geraldine remarked with surprise, in the midst of this commemorative rejoicing, that the cross, borne at the head of the procession, was veiled ; but she concluded, and she was right, that, like the mournful verses of the gradual, the cross was covered to denote the approaching passion and death of the Son of God. The procession was most striking and imposing. The pontiff, as king and priest, was borne on a seat carried by twelve supporters, under a canopy held by priests. The heads of religious orders, with other ecclesiastics, followed his holiness, and closed the procession, the choir singing from the gospels the event commemorated. The " Sala Reggia," round which the procession passed, was lined with the city guards, and directly the pope entered the hall, the guard of nobles surrounded his throne, and the gates of communication with the chapel were closed. The chanters who remained within the chapel with the congregation, and the choir who were accompanying the procession, then sang alternately the beautiful verse of the hymn " Gloria, laus et honor ;" and the procession having returned to the closed doors, the crossbearer struck with the staff of the cross to gain admittance ; and the procession entered, singing the verse " When the Lord entered into the holy city," &c. Solemn high mass commenced directly the holy pontiff had returned to the sanctuary, which was celebrated by a cardinal priest. The portion of the gospel selected for this mass is St Matthew's history of the passion of our Lord, and the manner in which it is always chanted on these solemn occasions is according to the ancient mode of reciting tragedy. The historical recital is by a tenor voice ; the words of the subordinate persons are given by a counter-tenor ; and our Saviour's expressions by a bass voice ; the choir singing the words spoken by the crowd. During this gospel, although the palm branches are still held in honour of Christ's victory over sin and death, no lights are borne ; and when it is recited that he bowed down his head and gave up the ghost, all knelt or prostrated, for some moments, in deep humiliation and solemn adoration of Him, who, for our sakes thus underwent the sorrows of death.

The beautiful hymn of the "Stabat Mater" was sung at the offertory of this mass, and this plaintive appeal to share in the sorrows of the mother of Jesus, following so immediately, as did the gospel, on His triumph, touched more directly the chord of human sympathy.

It was some time after the conclusion of the service, when the Abate Zaccaria joined our friends in the tribune, according to promise. He bore two beautiful little branches of palm and olive united, which with great care he had selected from those blessed by his holiness; and giving them to our heroine, bade her keep them with respect, not only as memorials of the great event that day commemorated, but also precious in themselves, although inanimate, having received the especially invoked blessing of Heaven, for the use of the faithful.

CHAPTER V.

*Thou framer of the light and dark,
Steer through the tempest thine own ark :
Amid the howling wintry sea
We are in port, if we have thee.*

*Ah, by thine own sad burthen borne,
So meekly up the hill of scorn,
Teach thou thy priests their daily cross
To bear as thine, nor court its loss.—Keeble.*

DURING the two following days, General Carrington and his daughter attended their accustomed early mass, and were each occupied with the devotions appropriate to this holy and mournful week in private; but on the evening of Wednesday their friend, the Abate, was again with them by appointment, and they together went to the Sistine chapel, to attend the office of "Tenebræ," which, as its name obviously implies, was intended to be celebrated in the darkness of night. The Abate felt assured, and Geraldine could not differ from him, that the Tenebræ of Wednesday was not the vigil, but the matins and lauds of Maundy Thursday, chanted directly after midnight by

most of the religious orders, till a mitigation was allowed to some, of deferring the nocturns till the office of lauds at day break, and to others of chanting the office over night.

"From the days of the apostles," said the Abate, "the Church has prescribed for her clergy a divine office, that is, a duty of attendance upon the Lord: this duty is prayer. Amongst the ancients the night was divided into four watches, and the day into four stations: so that the military who were appointed to the guard duty relieved each other at the termination of each watch or station. The Church militant of Christ imitated the vigilance and zeal of the soldiery of the earthly monarch. Like David, our fervent Christians arose at midnight to give praise to the Lord. Pliny the younger, Lucian, and Ammianus Marcellinus, mention the custom of the Christians of watching and singing at midnight; and Lactantius tells us they did so to prepare for the arrival of their king and God. But it appears, from St John Chrysostom, that the laity were not called to these night offices, except on Sundays and other solemn occasions. In the monasteries only, and amongst the clergy, 'the course, as it was termed, was regularly performed: and as the canons regulated the time, and manner of its performance, the hours, and subsequently the office, was known by the appellation of the 'Canonical Hours.'"

Geraldine remembered, and repeated to the Abate from the "*Mores Catholici*," "How holy is the Catholic night, the night of the middle ages, the time in which saints, dispersed all over the earth, are assembled to chant the same sacred hymns, and to commemorate the same great deliverance."

"Beautiful as true," said the Abate; "the faithful used especially to assemble at midnight, for the nocturns of Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, of Holy week, but for some centuries, the office has been celebrated on the preceding evening; for thus it was in the early habits of our predecessors, though to us moderns, it is the afternoon of our day."

"There is a difference of opinion, I believe," said the General to his daughter, "respecting the reason for extinguishing the candles, one after another. Some informing us, that the candles, which are ranged along the sides of the triangle, represent the patriarchs, and prophets, who, under the law of nature, and the written law, gave the world the light of that partial revelation which they had received, and then died; the last being St John

the Baptist, while the Saviour, who was not extinguished by his temporary death, is represented by the remaining light, which is carried to the back of the altar, and concealed ; during which the prayer is in mournful and respectful silence, the psalm beseeching mercy (*Miserere*), is sung, the last petition is made, and the convulsions of nature at the Saviour's death, are commemorated by the overthrow of stones and other heavy weights behind the altar. Do you incline to their interpretation, Signor Abate, or to that which is more generally received, of the candles representing the burning light of faith in the apostles, which in the hour of trial was extinguished, and that all left their Lord and Master, save our blessed Lady, who is represented by the concealed but still burning light ?”

“ I incline to the former exposition,” said the Abate ; “ but there is something peculiarly mournful and touching in the last view of the subject, and it seems to be the most popularly received. I fear,” continued he, “ that the Signora will find the service tedious ; for the nocturns are chanted in the most simple and ancient style, every ornament being omitted, that might distract the mind from the mournful tribute due to this commemoration of Him, who was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity.”

“ I shall not, by the blessing of God, find the *Tenebræ* service tedious,” said Geraldine ; “ and I have been told that the recitation of the ‘ Lamentation,’ which precedes the far-famed ‘ *Miserere*,’ is most affecting in its appeal to the heart.”

“ It is so,” said the Abate, “ and after the mournful dwelling of one voice upon the few wild notes of the continued lamentation, the effect is truly fine of the harmony at the close ; ‘ Jerusalem ! Jerusalem ! return thou to the Lord thy God.’ ”

Geraldine did not find the service tedious, for her mind and heart were occupied. The one voice in the Lamentation, with the irresistibly moving chorus, as the Abate had described it, was the more striking, from her never having heard before that species of chant. Nothing, however, to which she then, or had ever listened, could approach the effect produced on her whole being, when, after an impressive pause, the unearthly strain arose of the “ *Miserere* !” The consciousness of place and of time was lost ! That she now heard the wail of departed spirits, from the prison of their purification, was the most defined of her feelings, and this impression strengthened as the strain continued,

till she found herself in mental aspirations for their admittance into the angelic choir, to which their voices seemed already attuned. As the sounds died away, the pontiff read, in a low impressive voice, the concluding prayer; and when he paused, the light by which he had read disappeared, while the last and most exquisite harmony arose in deeper, more intense supplication, and loud strokes, which reverberated through the chapel, commemorating the veil of the temple being rent in twain, closed in deep awe the service.

In the primitive ages of the Church, it was customary to bring public penitents before the bishop, after matins on Holy Thursday; and after the penitential psalms, with appropriate prayers and litanies, had been said or sung, they received the first absolution; and after tierce, (the third, and our ninth hour), they were reconciled, by a second absolution, to the favour of the Church. Formerly, in the church of Salisbury, the archdeacon besought the bishop, in the name of the penitents at the church-door, to admit them to favour, and the ceremony must have been most edifying; but in these days of pride, and self-love, the conditions for gaining the indulgence of the Church, are of a far less humbling nature. It was usual to celebrate three masses on Maundy Thursday: at the first, public penitents were reconciled; at the second, the oils were consecrated for the sacraments throughout the year; and the third was celebrated with more than usual solemnity, in honour of our blessed Saviour's having, on that day, instituted the commemoration of his death, in the sacrifice of the mass, and the sacrament of the holy Eucharist. At this last-mentioned mass, it is customary in cathedrals, for all the attendant clergy to go to communion, when, as they receive sacramentally, and not in sacrifice, they receive under one kind only.

In gratitude and joy for this great gift to the Church, she mitigates on this day some of the mournful observances of the week, and the ornaments of the altar are veiled with white instead of purple. At the mass of this day the "Gloria in Excelsis" is sung, and the bells, which have been silent since Septuagesima Sunday, are rung during this hymn of joy, and likewise at the Papal Benediction; but, with these exceptions, they remain silent, in token of mourning, and wooden clappers are substituted, to call the faithful to their religious duties. On this day (Maundy Thursday) no kiss of peace is given at the altar, in

abhorrence of the kiss by which Judas betrayed his Lord. The celebrant consecrates two particles of the sacred Host ; one to be offered in commemorative sacrifice, and received in communion as usual at mass, the other to be reserved for the office of Good Friday, when no consecration takes place. The sacred Host thus kept, has been ever, with respect and awe, deposited in a suitable place, and for ages has been carried thither in procession : this being the anniversary of its institution by Him, who, when about to terminate His mortal life of sufferings, left us this pledge of His love. The procession now formed in the same order as that on Palm Sunday, with this striking difference, that, whereas the pontiff had, on the preceding occasion, been borne in triumph, he now humbly walked bare-headed, carrying the sacred Host, while incense was burned before it, and lights were held in its honour by all in the procession, which moved from the 'Sala Reggia,' into the Pauline chapel. Both the hall and the chapel were in a blaze of light. The instant the holy father had reverently received the ciborium from the altar, containing the sacred Host, the sacramental hymn of the "Pange Lingua" had commenced :

PANGE LINGUA.

Sing, my tongue ! in raptures sing
The mysteries of the world's great King ;
His glorious flesh, and saving blood,
Given in love to be our food ;
That blood, which in his torments flowed,
To ransom sinful man bestowed.

Bestowed by Heaven on sinful earth,
A spotless virgin gave Him birth ;
And while He lived, He scattered wide
His word's true seed on every side,
And left rich pledges of His love
Ere He resumed His throne above.

Surrounded by His faithful few
That evening of His last adieu,
And fully kept the sacred rite
Ordained for that eventful night ;
For food, He gave Himself, to prove
A sweet remembrance of His love.*

The procession having now reached the Pauline chapel, the choir continued :

"The word of solemn mystery said,
 To Christ's own flesh converts the bread ;
 The wine, the Almighty's voice has heard,
 His blood 's present at the word ;
 And faith, though sense will fail us here,
 Suffices to the heart sincere."

When the Pontiff had arrived at the altar of the Pauline chapel, a cardinal deacon, receiving on his knees the sacred treasure, conveyed it to the depository prepared for it ; which the sacristan having locked after the pontiff, still kneeling with his cardinals, had incensed the blessed Sacrament, the key was given to the priest who was to celebrate on the following day, and who was the Cardinal Grand Penitentiary. During this last ceremony, the concluding verses of the hymn, beginning "Tantum ergo," were sung.

"Let us profoundly bend before
 This awful mystery, and adore ;
 Let types of former days give way,
 Like darkness at the blaze of day,
 And sense's failure be supplied
 By faith, our firm support and guide

 To God the Father, God the Son,
 His equal, sole-begotten one ;
 And to the Holy Ghost, we raise
 Our hymns of jubilee and praise ;
 Salvation, power, and glory be
 To God, who reigns eternally."

The procession, then, instead of returning to the Papal chapel, proceeded to the loggia or gallery, in front of the church of St Peter's, the holy father being again borne in state to give his apostolic blessing to the assembled multitude. Many rushed from the Sistine chapel to witness this imposing sight, but our heroine had been promised not only to witness, but also to partake of the blessing on Easter Sunday, and therefore, had listened to the advice given her, not to attempt to see every thing and enjoy nothing, and now quickly accompanied her father and the Contessa, to the 'Sala della Lavanda,' to see the ceremony of the holy father washing the feet of his priests. By this arrangement they arrived in time to secure seats just opposite the expected scene, and, before the entrance of his holiness, the Abate joined them, and whispered to Geraldine, that he concluded she was aware that the interior disposition must accompany the outward action to render it acceptable to Almighty God ; and, that

no one gave more edification, by the fervour and simplicity of his humility, than did his present holiness. "If the Signora, in common with her fair countrywomen, has been disposed to scoff or been offended at seeing the chief bishop receive the tribute of respect of kissing his foot, she will now be pleased in seeing him kiss the feet of others."

As the Abate spoke, the holy father, with his retinue, entered the hall, and the whole company knelt, until he had extended his hand in token of benediction, when they arose, and a cardinal deacon having received the especial blessing before singing the gospel, the thirteenth of St John was chanted, the choir first singing the versicle, "*Mandatum novum do vobis.*" The pontiff's cope and breastplate were then taken off, and he was clad in the alb, and girt with a towel of fine cloth. The holy father then proceeded to where the thirteen priests were seated, attended by his deacons, who bore the utensils, towels, &c., used by the pontiff. He knelt and washed the right foot of each priest, which, having dried, he kissed. A medal of gold, and one of silver also, were then given to each priest, together with the embroidered towel.

After this, in another hall, his holiness waited on the same thirteen priests at their repast.

In the evening of this day, Geraldine was taken by her father to see the blazing cross of fire suspended within the dome of St Peter's. The whole of the immense fabric was thronged with people, of every age, clime, and condition, gazing on that glorious object, and the pontiff and all the cardinals now descended from the Sistine chapel, where they had been attending the service of *Tenebræ*, room having been kept for them by the Swiss guards. Silence, holy silence, reigned throughout the whole church,—even the whispering and tittering of the English Protestant ladies ceased for a short time, while the pontiff and all around him lay prostrate before the symbol of Redemption. But at the exposition of the sacred relics, which soon after took place, General Carrington, being tormented by the unbecoming behaviour of the English groups near him, drew Geraldine away, and they drove immediately to the church of Sant' Antonio de' Portoghesi, to visit the blessed sacrament there deposited; and as this visit was unexpected to our heroine, and made, as she supposed, by her father from simple devotion, the effect was still more impressive, of the resplendent repository of the sacre

Host, which poured forth a flood of light, reflected on all sides of that small but exquisitely beautiful church. General Carrington and his daughter joined the prostrate congregation in silent prayer, till, touching her on the arm to arise and look around her, he led her in a short time back to the carriage, where he told her that, if she wished it, he would take her that evening to a sacred concert, held at the house of an Italian lady, where she would hear the "Miserere" to perhaps even greater advantage than in the Sistine chapel, as there would be an instrumental accompaniment of the finest harmony.

"How richly must I be feasting," said Geraldine, "to feel no wish for this sacred concert, which would once have been, indeed, a treat. I shall, however, be happy to be with you, dearest father, if you are going."

"No," said the General, "I have no inclination for this concert but for your sake; I will, therefore, order them to take us home, and you shall go early to rest."

On their return to the palazzo, and before Geraldine had retired, the Abate called, scarcely expecting to see them, as he concluded they had gone to the sacred concert. He was much pleased to find that Geraldine had visited the sepulchre in the church of St Antonio, as he gave it the preference, but was a little disappointed to find her so unusually silent.

"Is the Signora disappointed?" said he.

"I am only disappointed, or rather perplexed," replied she, "at the anticipation of time, which disturbs my devotion, and must continue to do so: for instance, Signor Abate, you and every one term the place in which the blessed sacrament is deposited 'the sepulchre,' and I understand that the figure of our blessed Lord is often represented lying in the tomb to which the sacred Host is carried on this Maundy Thursday. Why do you represent the burial of our Saviour before his death? Why is not Holy Saturday the day appointed for guarding the sepulchre?"

"After the mass of Maundy Thursday," replied the Abate, "the blessed sacrament is carried from the altar, which is stripped of all its ornaments, to represent the desolation of the Church, at the loss of her divine spouse, for it was on the night of Maundy Thursday, that our Lord was betrayed and taken. The faithful have been in the constant habit of following their hidden Lord to the depository in which the blessed sacrament is

placed, to pay their homage ; and this custom has fallen in so naturally with the idea of his lying hidden in the sepulchre, that by degrees that name has been given to the receptacle, and the two pious acts have become blended."

CHAPTER VI.

Is it not strange the darkest hour,
That ever dawned on sinful earth,
Should touch the heart with softer power
For comfort than an angel's mirth ?
That to the cross the mourner's eye should turn
Sooner than where the stars of Christmas burn ?

Yet so it is, for duly there
The bitter herbs of earth are set ;
Till, tempered by the Saviour's prayer,
And with the Saviour's life-blood wet,
They turn to sweetness, and drop holy balm,
Soft as imprisoned martyr's death-bed calm,
Hymn for Good Friday.—Keeble.

Nothing could surpass the look of grief and desolation in the papal chapel, on the morning of Good Friday. The altar was stripped, the sanctuary without a carpet, the benches and the throne uncovered, the vestments of the pontiff, cardinals, and subordinate priests, were of mourning hue ; and on their entrance they lay prostrate in silent prayer before the altar, on which a simple cloth was spread, while the lesson was chanted from the prophet Hosea : " Thus saith the Lord, ' In their affliction they will rise early to me. Come and let us return to the Lord, for he hath taken us, and he will heal us, he will strike and he will cure us. He will revive after two days. On the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. We shall know and shall follow on, that we may know the Lord. His going forth is prepared as the morning light, and he will come to us, as the early and the latter rain to the earth. What shall I do to thee, O Ephraim ! What shall I do to thee, O Judah ! your mercy is as a morning cloud, and as the dew that goeth away in the morning. For this reason have I hewed them by the

prophets. I have slain them by the words of my mouth, and thy judgments shall go forth as the light, for I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than holocausts." The lesson read for the epistle, was from Exodus, relating to the institution of the passover, which prefigured the death of the Redeemer; and after the tract, followed the gospel of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to St John; after which, on this commemoration of the great day of expiation for the sins of all mankind, followed prayers "for the whole Church, for the holy pontiff, as its visible head, for all bishops, priests, deacons, and degrees of the clergy, for confessors, virgins, widows, and all other congregated portions of the faithful, for temporal sovereigns, for catechumens; also to beseech the removal of error, of disease and famine, for the liberation of captives, the safe return of travellers by sea or land, for the grace of conversion and mercy for all heretics and schismatics, for the Jews and Pagans;" from which beautiful collects, Geraldine perceived had been formed the "general prayer" in the Church of England liturgy, for all sorts and conditions of men. At the conclusion of these prayers, the officiating priest, who on this occasion was the cardinal grand-penitentiary, putting off his chasuble, partially uncovered the crucifix, beginning the anthem "Ecce lignum crucis," "Behold the wood of the cross! on which hung the Saviour of the world;" the choir responding, "Come let us adore!" This was repeated three times, as the celebrant disclosed by degrees the whole of the crucifix; and the pontiff having risen from the third genuflection at the uncovering the cross, and having laid aside his shoes and cope, descended from his throne, when his mitre being also removed, he knelt in homage, and again, as he advanced to kiss the cross, knelt twice. The choir then chanted those affecting passages termed "Reproaches," and at the end of each the reply was given in Greek and Latin: "O my people, what have I done to thee, or in what have I afflicted thee, answer me? Because I led thee out of the land of Egypt, thou hast prepared a cross, for thy Saviour?"

Response. "O holy God,—O holy and powerful,—O holy immortal one,—have mercy on us!"

"Because I led thee out through the desert for forty years, and fed thee with manna, and brought thee into a land exceedingly good, thou hast prepared a cross for thy Saviour! What

more ought I to do for thee, and have not done it? I planted thee indeed, my most beautiful vineyard, and thou art become to me exceedingly bitter, for thou hast given me vinegar in my thirst, and with a spear thou hast pierced the side of thy Saviour."

The chorus answer in turn the Greek and Latin as before.

"For thy sake I scourged Egypt with its first-born, and thou didst scourge me, and deliver me up. I led thee out of Egypt, drowning Pharaoh in the Red Sea, and thou didst deliver me to the chief priests.

"Before thee I opened the sea, and thou didst open my side with a spear.

"I went before thee in a pillar of cloud, and thou didst lead me to the judgment hall of Pilate.

"I fed thee with manna through the desert, and thou didst strike me with blows and scourges.

"I gave thee to drink the water of salvation from the rock, and thou gavest me gall and vinegar.

"For thee I struck the kings of the Canaanites, and thou didst strike my head with a reed.

"I gave thee a royal sceptre, and thou didst give to my head a crown of thorns.

"I lifted thee up with great power, and thou didst hang me upon the gibbet of the cross."

The whole chorus then sang,—

"O my people what have I done to thee, or in what have I afflicted thee?" followed by the Anthem.

"We adore thy cross, O Lord, and praise and glorify the holy resurrection, for by this word came joy into the whole world.

"May God have mercy on us, and bless us; may he cause the light of his countenance to shine upon us, and have mercy on us."

Then followed the hymn in honour of the cross, beginning "Crux fidelis," during which, the candles were lighted on the altar, and the procession, which had conveyed the sacred Host to the tabernacle of the Pauline chapel, on the preceding day, now fetched it thence, and the cross being borne before it uncovered, and raised in triumph, the choir sang the hymn "Vexilla Regis."

The sacred service of the mass then proceeded, the Mass of

the Presanctified, so called from the host having been consecrated on the previous day. Vespers immediately followed, and the altar was then stripped as before, and the door of the tabernacle left open, to show that its glory and treasure was gone!

Has the reader known what it is to revisit a room, endeared by many fond and holy remembrances; endeared still more in hours of sickness, and furnished with sufficient for the mind and heart, even when the lifeless form of the loved one lay within it; to revisit it when all was gone; and the exposure of the once private apartment,—doors, windows, all thrown open, and the removal of all that had served the owner, told that he was indeed dead? if so, he would have felt with Geraldine, as at the door of the chapel she looked back on the sanctuary, that nothing could equal the effect of its desolation, in conveying the impression of death,—of death! who then was dead? the world's Redeemer! Be hushed in awe ye mortals!

"Are you ill, my love?" said the General, as he followed her into the carriage.

"No, dear father," replied she, "but throughout the remainder of this day, and to-morrow, I should wish to watch and pray in some church where the holy sepulchre is represented."

The General looked at his watch: "It is you who are now anticipating, Geraldine," said he, "for the hour of the crucifixion is only just at hand, and the three hours' agony on the cross, is now about to be commemorated, in several of the churches. I could take you, but that I fear you would be overcome, and perhaps disagreeably so, by the vehemence of Italian feeling, both on the part of the preacher, and of his audience. We quiet English are rather repelled than attracted by such violent emotions."

"I should like to be in some church or chapel," said Geraldine, "during these three hours; and I can sympathise in true fervour, however contrasted in outward expression, from the national reserve to which I have been accustomed."

The General then gave orders to be driven to the nearest church, but found every entrance blocked up by earnest expectants of the solemn and mournful commemoration. He then thought of applying at the sacristy for a seat for Geraldine, when one of his Italian servants, who had been watching for them at the portico of the Sistine chapel, but had missed them, came with a message from the Abate Zaccaria, to say, that if the signora wished to

attend "le tre ore," at the church of St Andrea delle Tratte, a chair would be kept for her; and they accordingly hastened thither, where Geraldine, after much labour on the part of two kind ecclesiastics, reached the seat reserved for her; and the General, having promised to take charge of her when all should be over, had not followed into the dense mass of people, but remained in the portico. Our heroine had not been prepared for the all but dramatic representation of the awful scene of Calvary; and when, on raising her head from her silent prayer to look towards the sanctuary, she beheld the figure of our blessed Redeemer between the two thieves, so admirably wrought that nature seemed to have taken the place of art, she gasped for breath, and then dropping her face on her hands, mentally ejaculated, "this is too much!" At that instant, the first of the seven sacred sayings of Christ on the cross was solemnly given by a priest, accompanied by a set commentary on them. The first sentence was, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!" and a young Dominican friar, with a tide of fervent eloquence which bore away all coldness and criticism, burst in upon the commentary, and had won over our heroine to feel as if among the living witnesses of the dying agonies and dereliction of her God,—when the preacher paused, and three strophes of the "Stabat Mater dolorosa" were sung, during which he rested from his exertions; and then again, a priest from the sanctuary having given forth the second sentence of, "To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise," the friar, with renewed power, and the irresistible force of sincerity, continued. The third sentence is addressed to the blessed Virgin,—“Woman, behold thy Son!” and to St John,—“Behold thy mother.” The fourth,—and here the Dominican showed the deepest knowledge of the sufferings which God permits to the sensitive part of the soul while the superior part remains firm,—“My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?” Fifth,—“I thirst;” sixth,—“It is finished;” lastly,—“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!” During these seven portions of a sermon, or rather these seven sermons, between which were sung some verses of the plaintive “Stabat Mater,” the interest and attention of the congregation never flagged; tears, sighs, and groans began, continued, and increased, till on the resounding of the ninth (in our modern style the third) hour, the preacher exclaimed, “Ecco il momento!” and the whole congregation sunk prostrate, one cry of anguish

filling the church. Geraldine neither wept nor groaned, but her frame trembled, her heart felt ready to burst, and she remained insensible to the voice of the friar, which continued when she would have preferred silence. At length, she was roused by the simultaneous movement of the multitude to arise, and she beheld, crossing the sanctuary, which had been lined with painted scenery to represent Mount Calvary, a band of friars, who, representing the disciples, ascended by degrees to the cross, and began to draw out the nails, and take down the body. At the sound made by drawing forth each nail, so great was the emotion around her, and so painful her own sensations, that Geraldine, for the first time in her life, expected to faint. From the peasants arose a perfect clamour of grief, and from those of the highest Italian nobility of both sexes around her, the sobs and deep sighs continued, while the prayers in honour of the five sacred wounds of Christ were repeated. And now the body being taken down from the cross, and laid on a bier, just within the rails of the sanctuary, the congregation moved in regular train to kiss the feet and weep over them. Our heroine moved with the crowd; all was gentle and decent, and in order. At length, it was her turn to approach this semblance of the dead Christ, and the perfection with which the hue of death and lines of suffering were executed, having removed the dread which she entertained of desecration, she knelt with feelings more in accordance with the ardent crowd around her, than she could have supposed possible.

It was a considerable time before our heroine, in the procession made round the church, arrived at the spot where stood her father, and with him, Dr Wharton. The General looked with anxiety in her pale exhausted countenance, and drew her hastily through the now dispersing throng into the open air. "You are incapable of anything more to-day, Geraldine," said he, "and I regret having exposed you to all that highly-wrought feeling." Geraldine leaned on her father's arm in silence, while, on their way home, he conversed with Dr Wharton; but, on his again regretting that he had taken her to the preaching and representation of the "Three Hours," she replied, "There was no more feeling—indeed, how can there ever be sufficient for the all-engrossing commemoration of to-day. I was indeed overcome by witnessing the emotion of those around me, but, had not the subject deserved it, this alone would only perhaps have steeled

me in insensibility ; for, I have ever remarked, that if I see weakness in others, I am so far from sympathizing, that I feel new strength given me. But, dare I call the honest sensibility, the warm religious sorrow of these ardent Italians, a weakness? ah, no! rather let me strike on my own cold heart."

The General smiled—"God forgive me, then, child, if your heart be cold. But neither of our hearts is so, I humbly trust. Our reserve only is greater, and in this, I think, consists the great difference between the northern and southern nations : the former appear cold, the latter exaggerated. So striking a contrast is there between the Catholics of England and those of Italy, that I much doubt, whether they could live happily together, even with that firmest of all bonds of union, the same dogmas of faith. Now, our countrymen and women, if they be Protestants, never consider this national contrast, and place every apparent extravagance to the score of religion, for they know nothing of Catholicity in their own country, where, from its calm manifestation, it would be of course more acceptable,—at least, less obnoxious."

"Yes, indeed," said Dr Wharton. "National prejudices influence, in a lamentable degree, the judgment, if it deserve the name, which Christians of different countries pass on each other, and which judgment has, of course, been rendered more severe from diversity of creed. But let not the cautious and reserved son of the north, and his ardent and imaginative brother of the south, misjudge and condemn each other. Let the strong powers of reasoning, the independent and laborious spirit of investigation and of endurance, which characterizes the former, be manifested without pride or severity ; and let those intuitive perceptions of beauty and harmony, those impassioned aspirations towards whatever is lovely in creation or revelation, which distinguish the latter, be ever directed aright, and centre in the giver of those rich gifts : and if the outpouring of the soul into outward acts of devotion, be an irrepressible impulse in the southern Christian, and as such most acceptable to the Being who says, 'My son, give me thy heart ;' yet let these children of a genial sky, in their turn, learn to know, that with a different temperament, and a scrupulous dread of exaggeration, piety can exist with intensity, without requiring any vent save that of secret prayer."

"Alas!" said Geraldine, "when will it again be said, 'See how these Christians love each other?' When will party spirit cease, and distrust and suspicion melt into love and confidence?"

She uttered this with the greater feeling, as she recalled the offensive conduct, during this holy and mournful week, of the British Protestants in Rome, especially during the procession on Maundy Thursday, when the pontiff conveyed the sacred host to the receptacle prepared in the Pauline chapel. Their admission to the private chapel of the holy father, had been a concession, which, even in common decency, not to say courtesy, should have been acknowledged by a respectful demeanour; but, far from this, they had disturbed and insulted, by their levity and ridicule, the whole of the congregation. "I much regret," continued Geraldine to Dr Wharton, "that the ancient discipline has been discontinued, of dismissing all strangers, even the catechumens, from the church, before the celebration of the mysteries. What can induce the holy father to permit the admission of these idle scoffers?"

"Some come to scoff who remain to pray," replied Dr Wharton.

"God grant," said our heroine, with a sigh, "that such may be the result of Protestant intrusion this week upon the sacred mysteries of the Church." But she little thought that in one remarkable instance this had been the case, and that at the very procession on Holy Thursday, when the insulting conduct of his friends was at its height, an impression, sudden as wonderful, was made, never to be effaced from the mind and heart of the chief wit of the party. Yes, to the heart of the classical enthusiast and author, Mr Ellis, the voice of God had spoken!

He had stood immediately behind the file of guards which lined the centre aisle, through which the procession passed, and, as the pontiff advanced, bearing the sacred Host, the expression of awe, of love, of adoration, with which his venerable countenance was illumined, as he bore the hidden Deity—that look—that never-to-be-forgotten look, wrought the conversion of the sceptic.

CHAPTER VII.

At length the worst is o'er, and thou art laid
Deep in thy darksome bed,
All still and cold, beneath yon dreary stone,
Thy sacred form is gone.
Around those lips, where power and mercy hung,
The dews of death have clung,
The dull earth o'er thee, and thy foes around,
Thou sleep'st, a silent corse, in funeral fetters wound.

IN the evening, Geraldine being invited to hear again the *Misere* at the Sistine chapel, accompanied her father thither, and they afterwards drove, with the Abate Zaccaria and Contessa C—, to the hospital Della Trinità de' Pellegrini: an immense building, devoted to the reception of pilgrims of all nations, who during the three last days of the holy week, are gratuitously lodged and fed, while cardinals and nobility of both sexes, in humble piety, give them the primitive welcome, of washing their feet, and waiting on them at supper. Our heroine was permitted to stand a few instants at the half-open door of the male pilgrims, and then ascended, with the Contessa, to the female apartments, where she was greatly pleased to see the holy simplicity with which some of the loveliest of the high-born, offered, and the lowly received, these acts of humility and hospitality.

"I have not yet heard what were the impressions of the Signorina," said the Abate, as the party were returning to the palazzo, "on seeing our holy father perform the ceremony of washing the feet of twelve, or, as it is, thirteen priests, in honour of Christ washing the feet of his apostles?"

"I was almost, but not entirely, edified," replied Geraldine. "I know his present holiness to be full of humility, as well as zeal; therefore I expected, as I have gladly seen to-night, as much reality in the pious act as possible, and did not like to see him so much waited upon, by the attendant cardinal, during the performance; and I felt the same during the commemorative dinner, when there was too much rising and bowing when his holiness handed to each the plates, and bread, and wine."

"With respect to the holy father being waited upon during his own humble ministry on others, it may, indeed, appear in-

consistent," said the Abate, "till you consider the immense fatigues he has undergone, and has still to undergo, during the incessant ceremonies of the Holy Week, the more trying, on account of his great private austerities. His predecessors have frequently, from age and infirmity, been obliged to receive still greater assistance, and sometimes to delegate the ceremony to a cardinal: and I see no objection," continued the Abate, "to the priests rising, through humility, when handed the different articles at table by his holiness, for we may suppose the apostles to have given some token of respect to their divine Master, who is now commemorated."

"I think," said the General, "that in former days his holiness performed this act of precept and of commemoration on twelve poor men, previously to attending the priests."

"Yes," said the Abate, "there used to be two commemorations, but both are now in one."

"Why are these thirteen in number?" said Geraldine.

"Various are the reasons given," replied the Abate, "for this addition to the number of the apostles: some see St Paul, others St Matthias, in the thirteenth; others the host at whose house Christ celebrated the festival with his disciples; but the most generally received opinion is, that an additional guest is in commemoration of the miraculous appearance of an angel amongst the twelve poor men whom St Gregory the Great daily fed at his residence, which is now the church on the Monte Celio. And now, what are the plans of the Signora for tomorrow?" added the Abate to General Carrington.

"My daughter's plans ought to be confined to her pillow," replied the General; "but as I have lost the good habit of ever contradicting her, I suppose we are to be in St John Lateran, to witness the solemn baptism of some Jewish converts, and the benediction of the fire and incense; are we not, Geraldine?"

"And the paschal candle, my own Padrino," said she.

"And all the lessons or prophecies, I suppose," said the General, with a sigh of resignation, "which used to be read for the instruction of the catechumens, and continue for us members of the Church, beginning with Genesis, and giving the whole history of the providence of God to men, from the fall of our first parents to the reparation made by Christ. Signor Abate," continued he, after a little pause, "I like to go to church for worship, not for instruction."

"But do you not like to combine the two?" said the Abate.

"I prefer," said the General, "that instruction should be given apart, unless it may be in sermons."

"But," said the Contessa smiling, "these twelve lessons will enable the General to make twelve acts of patience, and he will rejoice in such an opportunity of merit."

"Which," rejoined the Abate, "might in former days have afforded twenty-four such acts, as they used to be read in Greek as well as in Latin, for the catechumens of that nation."

"I am still disappointed," said Geraldine, "at the early hour in which the once evening mass of Holy Saturday, is said; for how can one enter into all the joy of a near anticipation of our Lord's resurrection, when we have had no time to watch at his tomb? How beautifully correct and devout are the arrangements of the Church, as they still are found in the missal and breviary for this vigil."

"Yes," said the Abate, "the Church anciently celebrated no mass on this day, not only to express her desolation at the loss of her divine spouse, but as in death the soul and body of Christ were divided, the former descending into limbo, the latter remaining in the tomb, during which time had the Apostles consecrated the elements, the soul of Christ would not have been in the sacred Host and chalice; so in strict commemoration, no consecration took place on Holy Saturday, till midnight."

"The mass of the pre-sanctified on Good Friday is also, I conclude," said Geraldine, "because no consecration should take place during the commemorative absence of Christ's soul from his sacred body?"

"It is so," said the Abate, "Good Friday being commemorative of the time when his dead body would alone have been in the Eucharist, united however to his divinity, from which it was never separated. In like manner, when Jesus Christ himself consecrated at his last supper, he was in the Eucharist true God, and true man, but passible and mortal as he then was, instead of being, as he now is in the Eucharist, living, glorious, resuscitated, immortal, and, in a word, as he is in heaven."*

"Then," said Geraldine, "I am satisfied, as indeed I always am, after deeper inquiry into the wise regulations of the Church; but it certainly appeared strange to me, that the very day on which the death of Jesus Christ is commemorated, the sacrifice

should not take place, and the communion be only sacramental, and therefore received by the priest under one kind. And tell me, Signor Abate," continued Geraldine, "if for the reasons you have mentioned, and which I quite understand, the consecration should not be made during the death of our Lord, still I do not see why a separate consecration was not made on Maundy Thursday, and the chalice as well as the Host borne in procession to a place of safety; as every thing is so strictly commemorative, why is not the separation of the elements made to show the separation of the soul from the body of Christ?"

"The similitude would not be correct," replied the Abate, "because the soul and divinity of Christ, with his body, are equally in the chalice with his blood, as they are with his body in the Host; that is to say, the entire Christ is in each species; therefore, the separation would not be exemplified."

"Then, I conclude," said Geraldine, "that the chalice does not accompany the Host in procession to the receptacle, for fear of any accident and desecration, just as for that reason it is withheld from the laity?"

"You are correct," said the Abate.

On Holy Saturday morning, General Carrington took his daughter to witness the blessing of the fire, and of the paschal candle, followed by the baptism of some Jewish converts, who, having been fully instructed during the Lent, were now with great solemnity baptized by the cardinal-vicar, on this appointed day, in the church of St John Lateran. The baptismal font in this, and every Catholic church, was previously blessed. The first part of the office was the blessing the element of fire; which rite is found in the oldest liturgies extant, where also will be found proper blessings, not only for those things used for the altar, but in ordinary life,—a new house, a new bed, candles, food, water, &c.; for it is only by the divine blessing that creatures can be made beneficial to us, and evil spirits restrained from employing them to hurt us. Beseeching then the blessing of God on every thing we use, we acknowledge that from Him alone we receive them, to Him alone we would devote them: and this especially must be felt and acknowledged in all that relates to Divine worship; for, in the language of Scripture, creatures groan under the slavery of corruption, and must be purified and consecrated to God, before they be employed in his service.

The mystery of Christ's resurrection being the spiritual renovation of the world, Easter has always been esteemed the most suitable season for blessing many things we use. Fire enlightens our altars and churches, and is of great and continual use in our natural and civil life ; it ought, therefore, to be blessed before the paschal candle, for which it is required : and it is the custom for all lights and fires to be put out, and lighted up anew from fire struck from a flint, and blessed. This new fire represents Christ rising to kindle in our hearts a new spiritual fire of his love ; the old profane fire of our earthly passions being first extinguished in us by his victory over sin. It likewise serves symbolically to remind us of our obligation of walking in the newness of a spiritual life, being now risen with Christ by his grace.

The paschal candle is an illustrious emblem of Christ rising from the dead, the light of the world ; and is a sign which announces to us the joy and glory of his resurrection. The five grains of frankincense fixed in it, symbolically represent his five precious wounds, the embalming of his body at his burial ; and the spices brought by the holy women to his sepulchre. This great candle anciently gave light during the night-watching in the church on Easter eve.*

Geraldine observed in the sanctuary during the service of Holy Saturday, besides the paschal candle, a triple light, which she concluded was to signify "the light of the Triune God, shining to the world through Christ," and, on inquiring afterwards, found she was correct. The previous blessing of the fire was as follows: a fire was struck from a flint outside the church, and coals were kindled from it. The officiating priest with his ministers proceeded to the portico of the church, and thus blessed the fire:

"The Lord be with you."

"And with thy spirit."

"Let us pray. O God, who hast bestowed on thy faithful the fire of thy brightness, by thy Son, who is the corner stone : sanctify this new fire produced from the flint, that it may prove serviceable to us : and grant us so to be inflamed with heavenly desires through this paschal solemnity, that we may be able to arrive with pure minds at the festival of perpetual light, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen."

* "Moveable feast and fasts of the Catholic Church," by the Rev. Alban Butler.

Two more collects followed, and the five grains of incense were blessed. The thurifer then filled the thurible with coals from the fire, and the celebrant, having sprinkled the grains of incense and the fire with holy water, said the "Asperges me," &c. "Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, O Lord, and I shall be cleansed: thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow." On the new fire he then thrice threw the incense; the deacon lighted one of the triple lights which he held on a reed, and they entered the church; when kneeling, the deacon chanted, "Lumen Christi," the light of Christ. The same words were sung by him in a louder tone in the middle of the church, and still louder and more joyfully before the altar. Then, having asked the priest's blessing, it was thus given; "May the Lord be on thy heart, and on thy lips, that thou mayest worthily and duly announce his paschal praise: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, † and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Here the five grains of frankincense were fixed on the paschal candle in the form of a cross, with an appropriate prayer; the triple candle blessed, and also the lamps of the church; and, after the concluding prayer, the deacon changing his white vestments for purple, those twelve long lessons from the Old Testament were read, which the General had wished omitted.

At the conclusion of the lessons the baptismal font was blessed, and baptism solemnly given by the cardinal-vicar to four Jewish converts. The Litany from which that in the Church of England is principally taken, then followed; while the officiating cardinal lay prostrate at the altar, the rest of the ministers kneeling. At the conclusion, the choir sang the "Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison, Kyrie Eleison, Lord have mercy on us, Christ have mercy on us, Lord have mercy on us:" and mass began as usual, with lights on the altar, and directly the "Gloria in excelsis" was entoned, the veil was withdrawn from the altar-piece, the bells once more gave their joyous peal, and so well had the time been calculated with the mass at the pontiff's chapel, which gives the signal throughout the city, that before the choir had concluded the hymn of joy, the bells of every church in Rome, with the cannon from the Castle of St Angelo, proclaimed the glad tidings of the resurrection.

CHAPTER VIII.

O day of days I shall hearts set free,
 No minstrel rapture find for thee?
 Thou art the sun of other days,
 Thou shine, by giving back thy rays.

Enthroned in thy Sovereign sphere,
 Thou shedd'st thy light on all the years;
 Sundays by Thee, more glorious break
 An Easter day in every week.

GENERAL CARRINGTON and his daughter, having passed the remainder of Easter Eve in private devotion, and having each approached the tribunal of confession together, knelt at the early Mass in the little church of —, and together received their risen and glorified Saviour. There still remained time for private thanksgiving, rest, and refreshment, before they attended the grand pontifical High Mass at St Peter's, to which, crowds had been hastening to secure places even since sun-rise. Our heroine and her father had seats in the tribune erected near the high altar, and nearly opposite the throne, so that nothing was lost to them of the peculiar ceremonies of this great day. After having attended the previous commemorations in the confined dimensions of the Sistine chapel, the space of St Peter's appeared more than ever wonderful and magnificent, lined, as it was now, with the 'Guarda Nobile' in their rich gold and scarlet cloth, and white ostrich plumes, and the Swiss guards in polished cuirasses and helmets of steel; while, up the great centre aisle, advanced a procession, which, for splendour and sacerdotal majesty, could not have been surpassed even in the temple of Jerusalem; and, as Geraldine heard the signal trumpet sound, and caught the first view of the patriarchs, with their flowing beards, she could imagine that David and the high-priest were about to follow:—and mystically so they were, united in the royal priest, who, borne in his crimson chair of state, and wearing the white robes of joy, gave his benedictions on each side, as he advanced to the high altar, while the church bells mingled with the trumpets and other military music, and the choristers intoned, "Thou

art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

On arriving opposite the little chapel, where the blessed sacrament was exhibited, the holy father, removing his triple crown, descended to kneel in prayer with his cardinals. He was then borne to the foot of the high altar, where he again knelt in prayer before ascending the throne, which was on the epistle side of the sanctuary, and which was then surrounded by the priestly court of cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, mitred abbots, and penitentiaries. After they had paid their homage, the pontiff rising, and laying aside the tiara, intoned the versicle, at the opening of the office of tierce (the third hour), "*Deus in adjutorium meum intende*"—"Incline unto my aid, O God;" and while the choir continued the office, he read the private preparation for Mass; after which, having been vested by the cardinals, he gave out the concluding prayer of the hour, and, descending from the throne, went with nearly all those who stood around it, to the altar on which the triple crown was laid. The High Mass, with more than its ordinary ceremonial, then began, amidst clouds of incense and voices innumerable, in perfect harmony resounding the "*Hæc dies*"—"This is the day which the Lord hath made, let us be glad and rejoice therein." After the consecration and elevation of the host, the pontiff, having paid his adoration, and the "*Agnus Dei*" having been said, left the altar, and ascended the throne, where, having received from the deacon and subdeacon the paten and chalice, he took the holy communion, and then gave to each of the two assistant priests the remaining particles of the sacred Host. They also partook of the chalice, after having received from the holy father the kiss of peace, and returned to the altar.

Geraldine considered what this could mean, and proposed several mystical explanations to herself during the latter part of the service, amongst which was the following, which was correct, namely,—“That as our blessed Saviour first instituted the holy sacrifice, and commenced his mystic offering when he consecrated the holy eucharist upon the table in the private chamber, with his apostles only, but perfected and consummated it openly before the multitude upon Mount Calvary; so his venerable vicar consumes upon the elevated platform of the throne, in presence of the assembly, that sacred body and blood which he had consecrated at the altar, in presence only of his priestly attendants.

Several of the cardinals, and of the chief nobility, then made their Easter communion, after which, the pontiff returning to the altar, read the concluding prayers of the Mass, during which the General, having silently opened the door of the tribune, signed to Geraldine to follow him, and quickly led her, by ways to him familiar, up to the loggia—a gallery erected on the top of the colonnade, which surrounds the piazza of the church, and to seats kept for them in the front row, by two of the military. Geraldine looked down on the piazza, or rather on the heads of the people, who in one dense mass were in expectation of the papal benediction, and then along the colonnade, which was equally covered with the higher orders, principally English,—and longed to be amongst the simple devout peasantry below, till a feeling of personal safety made her thankful for her elevated position, when she beheld the military, and behind them, fresh thousands, pouring down the steps and platform of the church into the piazza. All was, however, in the greatest order; no noise, no struggle between the guards and the people; all were apparently impressed by the nature of the ceremony which had thus assembled them. At length, even the subdued murmur of expectation was hushed, for the ancient white “flabelli,” or feather fans, were seen, which preceded the pontiff, and Gregory XIV., the two hundred and fifty-seventh successor to St Peter, appeared on the gallery without the church; and raising his hands and eyes to implore the assistance of the blessed spirits which surround the throne of God, he thus prayed:—“May the holy apostles, Peter and Paul, in whose power and authority we place confidence, intercede for us with the Lord. Amen.” “We ask through the prayers and merits of the blessed Mary ever virgin, of the blessed John the Baptist, of the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul, and all the saints, that the Almighty God may have mercy upon you, and that all your sins being forgiven, Jesus Christ would bring you to eternal life. Amen.” “May the Almighty and merciful Lord bestow upon you indulgence, absolution, and remission of all your sins; opportunity of true and fruitful penitence; hearts always contrite and penitent; amendment of life; grace and consolation of the Holy Ghost; and final perseverance in good works. Amen.” Here the pontiff arose; those few of the multitude who had remained standing, sank on their knees, and he continued,—“And by the blessing of Almighty God, Father—, Son—, and Holy Ghost—, descend upon you, and remain with you for ever

Amen." One of the cardinals now read, first in Latin, and then in Italian, the notice signifying, that to all those who had attended with true dispositions of contrition, and fervent purpose of amendment, and had complied with the conditions of the Church, the holy father granted a plenary indulgence. Printed notices of this announcement were then thrown down amongst the people, while the cardinal-deacon, in the name of the sacred college, congratulated his holiness on the recurrence of the sacred festival; and the last "Amen" was thrice repeated by the chanters, amidst the peal of bells from St Peter's, re-echoed by all the churches, by the loud trumpets of the military, and by the artillery of the Castle. Many,—we will trust most of those present,—raising their hearts with St Austin, who, on this joyful feast, exclaims,—"O happy Alleluia, which we shall one day sing in heaven! where the angels are the temples of God; where all those who shall publish his praises, shall be linked together in the bands of love, and in perfect peace; and those who praise God, shall possess perfect security and joy. O happy Alleluia! Let us also sing here below, Alleluia! though we now live in pain and trouble, that we may sing it there in perfect security. O Alleluia! Praise ye the Lord."

This first of the three years which our heroine passed in Italy, Easter fell unusually late; and in a few days after the festival of the resurrection, Rome was nearly emptied of the strangers who had flocked into the city. General Carrington however still lingered, until the commencement of June, and Geraldine resumed her vocal and artistic pursuits with fresh ardour. Her father then took her, first to Frascati, where several of their acquaintances had taken villas, and afterwards to Tivoli, where, had a suitable residence been found, our heroine would fain have dwelt. Such however was not the case; and perceiving that the General much inclined towards Frascati, which is only half the distance from Rome, she endeavoured to forget the wilder beauties of the former place, and to enjoy the freshness of those lovely groves of arbutus, ilex, pines, and cypresses, which surrounded the stately villa of her father's preference. One sight more in Rome fell to her lot just three weeks after their removal to Frascati, and gratified her more than she could have supposed possible from the nature of the exhibition. This was the illumination of St Peter's, and the fireworks from the Castle of St Angelo, to which she was taken by her father, and which she would willingly have declined,

but for her earnest wish to receive his affectionate attention with all the pleasure she had hitherto felt. After this wonderful and beautiful sight, our heroine remained, during the sultry months, partly at Frescati, partly at Cività Vecchia, with the Contessa C——, and the family of Cardinal W——. At the latter place she celebrated, amongst those congenial friends, the anniversary of her entrance, or, as they always termed it, her return to the Church, and the blessed event of her first communion.

It was in the summer of this year, after Geraldine's return to Frescati, that she was informed by her father, that proposals had been made to him, on the part of an illustrious Italian family, for an alliance between herself and the second son, who was spoken of very highly; but that unless she had strong reasons against what he was about to propose, it was that she should consent to a match of inferior title, but far more advantageous in every other respect, namely, with Sir Eustace de Grey. It would be impossible to describe our heroine's astonishment at this sudden mention of a name, which had never passed her father's lips, and which comprised so much that was calculated to embarrass her. The first painful impression was, that her father was wearied of the domestic tie from which he had been so long free, and her heart resented what she conceived a plan, to make her happy, independently of himself. She remained silent, and the General continued to pass encomiums on that 'highly talented and deserving young man,' his ancient family, the friendship that had so long existed between Sir Hugh de Grey and himself, &c., all winding up to the climax that he was one of the most eligible matches in England.

Since leaving England, our heroine had frequently recalled De Grey to her remembrance, and had dwelt longer on that remembrance than she would ever have admitted even to herself, but her thoughts had turned entirely on his truth, his manly courage, and his sincere piety. She had only known him as poor; she had forgotten that he had become rich, and the De Grey of her imagination had no identity with that "highly deserving young man," presented to her, in so prosaic a manner, as an eligible match. A thousand vague but uneasy feelings arose. Where then was Sir Eustace de Grey? Why had he never endeavoured to conciliate her farther esteem, before sending these abrupt proposals.

The silence continued for some considerable time ; at length the General said, " Well, child, have you no inquiries to make ? "

" I have, my dear father," she replied : " pray what has become of Don Carlos Duago ? "

Not all the artillery on the plains of Vittoria, had caused so startling an effect, as this short sentence on the frame of the General. He replied however as a politician, by another question : " And pray what can he or any one have to do with our present conversation ? and what is your motive for this inquiry ? "

" I should like to know that he is happy," said Geraldine.

" Upon my word," said the General, in a tone of sarcastic pleasantry, " I believe the happiness of Don Carlos Duago, to be chiefly influenced by the smiles of a certain beautiful Andalusian ; but should I ever chance to meet him, I can mention that a fair English lady cannot forget him."

" It is enough, sir ! " said Geraldine, the indignant spirit flashing from her eyes. Then in a softer tone she added, " Could I hope to form your happiness, my father, as you have done mine, I would entreat you to propose no one to me, but let me continue, as I once hoped ever to be, your own Geraldine."

The General was moved, and in his most conciliating and endearing manner, assured her of his unabated affection, and that she would still and ever continue his own Geraldine ; but that, involved as he was in public life, it would ensure his happiness to see her united to one deserving of her ; and explained to her his reasons for concealing from her till now the restrictions he had placed on De Grey ; and by his apparently unreserved confidence, won from her the avowal that her preference accorded with his wishes : that she had inquired for Don Carlos only from a wish to have her mind relieved from any responsibility concerning him ; and promised that if her father would not hurry her to respond to feelings she then heard of for the first time, she would receive Sir Eustace when he should arrive, as one to whom she owed both esteem and gratitude, from his having aided her to find her present happiness in the Catholic Church.

Soon after this conversation, De Grey presented himself at Frescati, and the following autumn General Carrington received the long expected appointment to the — Isles. This made him hasten his daughter's marriage ; and our heroine, notwithstanding her preference for the object of her father's choice, a preference now strengthened into sincere attachment, was hurt

to perceive how easily she, who had been her father's pride and comfort, and sole anxiety, was now transferred to the guardianship of another.

CHAPTER IX.

Old friends, old scenes, will lovelier be,
As more of Heaven in each we see;
Some softening gleam of love and prayer,
Shall dawn on every cross and care.—

Keeble.

"Geraldine," said De Grey, the year after their marriage, on their return to Milan from a complete tour of Italy, "do you ever think of England?"

"Indeed I do," she replied; "I think very often of Elverton, and of the abbey, and of Father Bernard, and, above all, of the good we may do amongst the dear poor."

"And do you never think of the Moat?" said he.

"Ah!" replied Geraldine, "you know very well that but for the Abbey I would rather live at the Moat than at the Hall, notwithstanding all the ghost stories; for I would rather not accept the sacrifice you make to my father's wishes, of dividing your time between the two properties."

"I think it so wise a request," said De Grey, "that I have no difficulty in complying with it; besides, whatever be your attractions towards the old ruin, they cannot surpass mine."

"But why do we talk of England in this manner?" said Geraldine. "Do you think we ought to return?"

"Indeed," replied De Grey, "I have thought so during the last six months, but I waited for you to propose it."

"And I am making such rapid progress in the perfection of obedience," said Geraldine, laughing, "that I have even arrived at not proposing anything. But I am truly willing to return."

And accordingly, a short time after this discovery of each other's sentiments, Sir Eustace and Lady Carrington de Grey returned to England, and to Elverton Hall, to the satisfaction of their friends, particularly Mr Everard, and to the joy of the

tenantry. The exact time of their expected arrival being ascertained from the steward, a band of stout and active enthusiasts awaited the travelling carriage, at a turn of the road, about a mile from the town, and dispossessing the tired horses and their riders of the prize, bore, with a speed incredible, through the hurraing multitude, the heiress of the manor towards her home. With the Catholics, who formed no inconsiderable portion of the crowd, the name of Sir Eustace, and blessings and welcomes, resounded with equal if not greater zeal: and our heroine, who had hitherto only laughed, with sparkling eyes, and glowing cheeks, now wept for joy.

"Geraldine," said De Grey, "all this is very pleasant to flesh and blood, but it is not the way of the cross."

"Ah, Eustace!" cried she, "do not prevent their honest welcome home."

"Not I, indeed," replied he. "It is very right for them to feel thus towards us, but we must take care, at the same time, to humble ourselves."

"Then let us repeat one of the penitential psalms," said Geraldine, "till we reach the Hall." They did so, and were together sounding forth the "Gloria Patri" at the end of the Miserere, when the steps of the carriage were let down by the faithful servants; and as De Grey and his wife entered the hall, they were folded in the arms of Lady Winefride.

Two happy useful years succeeded. As Geraldine had hoped, they effected much good amongst the "dear poor" on their estate, and were on the most friendly and hospitable terms with the families of their own condition, Catholic and Protestant. De Grey, in common with all the Catholics of the neighbourhood, had, before his quitting England for Italy, devoted one day in the week to prayers for the conversion (or re-conversion) of his country, and in the household now settled at Elverton Hall, this pious and patriotic practice was resumed; De Grey and his wife, with some of the domestics, offering the spiritual benefit derived from holy mass and communion, with that intention, and all joining in the "Litany of Intercession for England."*

Shortly after Geraldine's return, Miss Graham became her guest, and gave a place in her large heart to her friend's husband as frankly as he had requested it. The changes in the neigh-

* See Catholic Manual of Prayers

bourhood during the three years' absence of our heroine, had been many and great, but, in the welfare of two families only, was her heart interested beyond the duties of charity. The Rev. Edmund Sinclair, and De Grey, became sincerely attached to each other, and the mutual agreement of the families to dwell on those points only wherein they thought alike, produced frequent and affectionate intercourse between the vicarage and hall.

The old Earl of Hungerford was dead, and his widow continued to live at the Priory with her son and his lady, formerly Miss Scotney, whose "views," under the training of Major Tankerville, had at length arrived at that perfection of clearness and precision, that, in the household over which she now presided, no one besides herself, her husband and her own maid, could expect salvation.

The Dowager Countess received our heroine with a burst of grief and affection, so touching, that no one, far less Geraldine, could remain unmoved. The fountain of her sorrows was unlocked, and she poured forth a history, which, after three years entire separation from such "sayings and doings," seemed to our heroine like some broad caricature of human life, in which it was impossible she could ever have borne a part. The poor old lady might have exclaimed, "If in this life only I am to have hope, then were I most miserable;" for, she was fully aware, that her daughter-in-law's number of the elect was the "smallest of the small," and she repeated, that if she had had the strength of mind to keep to her old ways of religion, like her dear lord, she should be much happier; but, that she had not his courage, and farther informed Geraldine, that, in his last illness, Lord Hungerford resolutely barred his wing of the house "from all communication," as he called it, "with those who wished to convert it into a Bedlam:" said the Lord's prayer, the creed, and the ten commandments, every day; wished every man's conscience as comfortable as he found his own, and at last sent for the clergyman of the parish, and received the communion of the Church of England from him the evening before his death.

Before our heroine left her distressed old friend, she prevailed on her to visit the hall, and, on seeing the delight and terror which struggled in her countenance, promised that no one should attempt her conversion during her stay. This produced a ready grateful assent, and she actually made a private escape

Sedgemoor to Elverton in the following week, where she found a peace and freedom she had not known for years, and this without any misgivings of conscience, as Katherine, although more than ever that "eternal Miss Graham," became a confidential friend and adviser, to our heroine's great relief. Katherine had, by the death of relations, become possessed of a small independence, which she had resolved should continue such, having fully determined never to sacrifice her liberty to any one. Her former admirer and connexion had, on the discovery of her unexpected inheritance, discovered also the permanency of his attachment, but Katherine replied, in the witty and sarcastic words of an ancient Scotch ballad, a decisive negative.

De Grey used to rally Katherine on this spirit of independence in which she gloried, but of which he told her, he did not think the apostles would have approved. "For," said he, "you will find but two states of life spoken of in the Epistles and in the Acts of the Apostles; the consecrated virgin or widow, and the married mistress of a family." Many battles would ensue, to Geraldine's amusement; Katherine vindicating the freedom of her maiden state, and the great power it gave her of doing good, and challenging De Grey to find even in the order of charity, a more useful and pious set of women than she could show him in Edinburgh, amongst the sisterhood of seculars, who served God in their own way, with the freedom of a willing heart, and required no tyrant to lay down the law to them, and curb the true liberty of the children of God.

Katherine in her turn would rally our heroine on her loss of that precious liberty, and pretend to attribute, to the tyranny to which she had submitted, the silence and calm she observed to have stolen over her since they were last together. "I think, Geraldine," said she, one day, "that you are beginning not to care whether you are admired or neglected, praised or dispraised; and this must be in imitation of Sir Eustace, for I never before witnessed in any one living in society such indifference about its opinion."

"It is indeed the case with him," said Geraldine, "and is to be attributed to the singleness of heart with which he serves God. 'Self-love leads to multiplicity, divine love produces simplicity,' says an old Catholic author I have been lately reading, and I think he adds, 'Divine love is a calm and resolute

determination of the will to seek God, undistracted by creatures. This fidelity to the grace of God is indeed constantly shown me by my husband."

The next time Geraldine was alone with De Grey, something occurring to make her recall the observation of Miss Graham, that she appeared indifferent whether she were "admired or neglected, praised or dispraised," she said, "For some time past, praise, however soothing at the moment, has so completely passed from my mind, that in vain should I attempt to recall the language in which it has been uttered: and this has occurred in too many and remarkable instances not to have impressed me with gratitude, for surely this is the work of God."

"Every advance we make to the conviction that all that is not God is nothing, must be through his grace," said De Grey; "but still, there may be a natural cause for the faint impression which praise makes on you; because, you are so much accustomed to it, that you hear it just as you would any other truism; for instance, that it is a fine day, when not a cloud is in the sky, or breeze troubling the earth; and in the same way you forget the praise, as one fine day succeeding another prevents any distinct remembrance of them apart: while the slightest blame, like a passing hail-storm, disturbs, perhaps, the complacency of your fair-weather feelings, and you remember it as an intrusion, and an injury."

"That is indeed true," said Geraldine, "I still remain too sensible to blame; not a word or look of censure is ever forgotten, and will even rise in importance in the retrospect."

"I think that there is more self-love than humility in this," said De Grey; "it is not until by corresponding faithfully with the grace of God, he rewards us with sufficient strength to conquer nature, that we can renounce and fly from the opinions and judgment of creatures, and approach God."

"But if we have incurred the disapprobation of those who are friends and favourites of God," said Geraldine, "we may then grieve?"

"We may, and ought to grieve," said De Grey, "if we have incurred their censure, inasmuch as we have thereby offended God. Personal feelings, however, and misunderstandings, ought not to afflict the soul. God often permits the greatest saints to vex each other severely, yet without sin. But you know all this

far better than I can tell you, Geraldine. Why do you invite me to preach when I ought to be the listener?"

"Ah!" cried Geraldine, "you are now telling me that it is a fine day, when not a cloud is in the sky, or breeze troubling the earth! When shall I see the hail-storm?"

De Grey, who had risen to leave the room, now returned, and taking up a little packet of notes which lay beside Geraldine, he looked attentively at them, and then said, "If you really desire that I should advise—for it has not yet deserved blame—I would say that you are becoming too eager in this affair. You seem disposed to leave nothing for Almighty God to do. You surely have written and exhorted enough for its human support. Now make an act of resignation of its ill success, and dismiss it from your thoughts except in prayer."

"I will be guided by you," replied Geraldine. "Would you prefer my burning these remaining notes?"

"I would indeed," he replied; and Geraldine, repressing a sigh, watched the flames as they consumed the labours of the morning. At length, she said, smiling, "Confess to me, Eustace, that you do not enter very warmly into my plans for improving the condition of our Catholic poor?"

"Perhaps not," said he; "at any rate, I do not pretend to compare my zeal with yours; for you are always striving to better their condition in life: and were your power equal to your wishes, the poor would cease to exist in the land. A misfortune which, I thank God, is not likely to take place."

"I should like to see them independent of precarious bounty," said she, "by the men being provided with constant labour."

"Ah! but your grand schemes of political economy do not rest here," said De Grey. "You would like to see the son of the labourer become a small farmer, and his grandson raised to be a great landed proprietor, and member for the county."

"No, indeed!" replied she, laughing, "even were I to live to the good old age requisite to watch this spirit of exaltation. But as you have drawn one picture, let me draw its contrast, and place you in the foreground, emptying your purse, while I am ladling out soup to sturdy mendicants of every age and sex, who, finding it far easier to live on the bounty of the rich than to labour, are content literally to 'take no thought for the morrow, what they shall eat, or what they shall drink, or wherewithal they shall be clothed.'"

“And why should they not take our Saviour's words just as he spoke them?” said De Grey.

“Surely,” replied Geraldine, “our Lord intended only, that after we have done what we can, we are to rest without anxious thought.”

“Geraldine,” said De Grey, “you have not yet felt the striking difference which exists between the Protestant and Catholic poor, as regards their condition. The former,—I speak of the pious alone of each denomination,—look on poverty as an evil from which it is their duty to escape; the latter, as a condition, not only pronounced blessed by the Saviour, but sanctified by his personal choice. They hear and read of the perils of the rich; they know that many have left, and are daily leaving their possessions, and becoming poor, that they may be rich in heaven. They know, also, that those Catholics who retain the stewardship of their riches, give to the poor as ‘lending to the Lord;’ and that, on their parts, if they learn not humility, patience, love of sufferings, and conformity to the will of God, they are unfaithful to the means of grace afforded them by their lowly condition.”

“Is it then this preference of poverty and humiliation,” said Geraldine, “which causes such a contrast between the lower orders in Catholic and Protestant countries.”

“I do not admit that the Protestant states are necessarily more flourishing,” replied De Grey; “but of late years, Almighty God has permitted such heavy afflictions to fall on his Church, that in Catholic countries no one scarcely can be anything but poor; yet, a great contrast would always be seen in this respect, that in Catholic countries the peasant is contented to remain such, while a restless wish to be a greater man than his father actuates every class in the northern states. This is the glory of the political economist, but it is not the glory of the gospel.”

Soon after this conversation, their friends having left them, De Grey and his wife removed for the summer months to the Moat, where having fewer active duties, Geraldine indulged her increasing love for Catholic books of divinity, and her still greater love of silent thought. De Grey, who was both a reader and a thinker, would interrupt her at length as much for her sake as his own, and they would converse on the subjects which interested each.

One day, however, it was our heroine's turn to break the silence, by consulting him respecting her faithful, but now incompetent maid, Mrs Kelsoe ; whose temper had at length become all but insupportable to herself and others.

"Do you not think, Eustace," said she, "that it is far better to remove from oneself 'dangerous occasions' of impatience?"

"It is still better to conquer the impatience," said he.

"But," said Geraldine, "I really love her, and wish to see her happy. She is not so at present, because, being obliged to have an assistant in the person of that sweet little Jane, and yet tormented by her jealousy, which she calls her feelings, she is miserable herself, and torments both me and her unfortunate aide-de-camp. Would it not be very desirable to give her the south Lodge at Elverton, with everything to make her happy?"

"Why do you consult me about it at all?" said De Grey.

"Because," replied Geraldine, "I wish to do what is best."

"I think then," said De Grey, "by your sending Mrs Kelsoe into honourable banishment, you would lose the opportunity afforded you of suffering something for God's sake. It is a Catholic principle 'not to seek for much rest, but for much patience ;' although without an especial grace, we are not advised to seek trials. How often have you admired the aged domestics you see in most of our Catholic families, who have never changed their masters. Attachment and fidelity alone do not effect this."

"Did I not think," said Geraldine, "that my dear old friend would be made happier by the change, I would not propose her elevation to be mistress of the Lodge."

"I am convinced you would not," said De Grey, "but it is of yourself I am thinking. What other trial have you? None whatever! Do not therefore shrink from this. The principle of receiving all suffering as a positive good to the soul, will enable you to bear it."

Mrs Kelsoe, therefore, was to remain, and her lady willingly consented to suffer, until the former should spontaneously offer to resign her office, which soon after their return to Elverton took place, to the relief and promotion of her long-tried assistant. Her feelings were soothed by the charge of the south Lodge, where she was often visited by her lady, and where she often entertained other guests by the account of her travels. Above

all, of her having actually seen the pope, who looked as much of a Christian as any of them!

"All is calm around you now, Geraldine," said De Grey, "yet,

'Like ships that have gone down at sea,
When heaven was all tranquillity,'

you are drooping both in health and spirits. Is the trial within?"

Geraldine looked up and smiled, but the smile was not from the heart, and all that could be extracted from her was, that she was conscious of a change within, but could scarcely define or comprehend, far less explain it.

De Grey said no more, but continued to observe her frequent fits of abstraction, and that, with the exception of works of benevolence, she would forget every wonted pursuit, to muse as she thought, unseen. When roused from, and rallied on, these absent fits, Geraldine would, as at first, smile, and playfully elude the subject, but soon these abstracted hours were prolonged, and De Grey sometimes surprised her in tears, for which she either would not, or could not, account, and which began at length to produce a feeling on his side of resentment, for this want of confidence; and something of constraint and estrangement arose, as a cloud between them. One evening, when, having vainly sought her in her accustomed haunts, De Grey was passing the cedar grove to make a fresh search, he caught a glimpse of Geraldine's white dress, which the next instant was lost in the deep foliage; and moved by his wounded and impetuous feelings, he darted up the nearest walk, and again guided by a passing glimpse of the white dress, he dashed through the obstructing branches and stood before her. Geraldine had chosen for her place of refuge, a circular opening made by the removal of one of the trees, the lower part of the trunk having been left with the root, against which she had just knelt, but arose on hearing the approach of her husband, and both remained silent.

"How have I deserved this?" at length said De Grey. "Is it after four years of union in love and faith, that you would now fly from me? Have we not together shared all the blessings of the altar? Have we not opened our hearts to each other, and

have I ever controlled your pious exercises? Have I not rather by my sympathy and approval, given you encouragement?"

Geraldine was still silent, and when De Grey next spoke, it was with a voice choked by emotion.

"How changed the time, Geraldine, when soon after our marriage, having reproached you with smiling on every one as well as on me, you made me this sweet answer: 'Oh, Eustace, what are smiles? mine, it is true, spring from my happy heart, and call on all creatures to rejoice with me, but you alone can ever have the sacred privilege of my tears!' and have you kept your word? No! you weep in secret, you dread my intrusion on your solitude, you even deny me a reply!" De Grey bent his look keenly on Geraldine as he spoke, for hitherto, at the slightest word or even tone of rebuke from him, her sensitive feelings would overpower her, and he would be forced to become the comforter. He now stood awaiting the moment in which he might approach and pardon her, and as she continued to cover her face with her hands, he expected to see the tears trickle through them, but when Geraldine removed them, her eyes were tearless, and her countenance, though sad, was calm and resolved.

"Yes," at length she said, "I will speak, I will open to you my whole heart. I could not have kept any earthly secret from you, and in my heart I have told you this, but I had not courage to give you pain, and all my prayers, and all my communions, have been offered for strength to tell you,—that I—that a great change has come over me,—I no longer,—oh! Eustace, I can love you only in God!"

It was now De Grey's turn to be silent: an undefined sense of approaching bereavement struck on his heart. Geraldine continued: "Indeed I wished long since to tell you this, and in answer to my prayers, strength seemed to be given me in my dream of last night."

"Your dream!" echoed De Grey, impatiently, "you are forbidden by the Church to place confidence in dreams."

"But I will only use it," said Geraldine, "to illustrate the state of my soul. I was alone, and looking up to Heaven, when a dove descended and nestled in my bosom. I began to caress it, but it left me again for Heaven, then returned—then left me—again returned—and thus it continued till I awoke. Oh! Eustace, I am like that dove, I am borne above this world, and

raised in spirit to joy I never knew till now, and then I return to my earthly love."

"And so you ought," cried De Grey. "You are not called to spend your life in raptures; but these favours are given you that you may be still more faithful to those duties and ties on earth, to which, in the sight of Heaven, you are pledged."

"I do not think," said she, "that the happiness I enjoy, when alone with my God, can be called a rapture or ecstasy, for I am not borne out of myself, I do not lose my identity, although I forget it, for I neither think nor reason about anything. I am conscious of the presence of God, in an immediate, awful, yet sweet manner, and I seem to desire no more. I do not pray or praise: all the active powers of my mind seem hushed—my heart seems calmly content,—and thus I remain till something external rouses me."

"And then," replied De Grey, "you ought to return with renewed vigour to the duties of your state. Do you suppose that *I* have no struggle to prevent my affections for you becoming too engrossing? Do you suppose that *I* forget that I must love you in God and for God,—can it be possible that you wish to leave me."

"I do not wish to leave you," said Geraldine.

"I trust not," said he, "for were you to do so, you would be most guilty in the sight of Heaven. Remember that, in the instances, which, perhaps, you have in your mind, of the early saints, the consent of both parties was necessary, and I do not give mine—I, at least, will remain faithful to that sacrament which is the symbol of Christ and his Church, and which made us one."

"Ah! Eustace," cried she, "you think me wrong, and I have given you pain, yet you would have the secrets of my heart."

"I prefer knowing them," said he; "but, believe me, that it is very contrary to your usual judgment and steady piety, to suffer dreams and vain fervours to draw you from me."

"Alas! alas!" cried she, "they must appear vain fervours, but—"

"Yes, Geraldine, they are so; and if you will, for once, yield your judgment to mine, you will be happy."

"For once!" cried she. "Oh, Eustace, I have been ever submissive to you."

"You have, Geraldine, you have been submissive, and your

submission has been adorned with every grace that could render it acceptable to God, for whose sake you have yielded your will: but I now ask—and for the first time I ask it—the submission of your understanding—this, inasmuch as it is more difficult and more painful, is more heroic; but there was a time when nothing could seem difficult or painful, if done for God and for me.”

“If it be really for God and for you, no sacrifice could seem great,” said she.

“Well, then,” said De Grey, “make the sacrifice of these solitary musings, of these secret ecstasies, for a while at least, and in the mean time we will both pray that you may see the delusion, if it be one.”

“If it be one,” repeated she.

“Ah! Geraldine,” cried he, “you cannot yield; and yet, believe me, that God values far more the humility which mistrusts itself, than all the raptures imaginable.”

Geraldine replied not, but stood silently in prayer, her eyes raised to Heaven, and De Grey felt his heart beat as he awaited the result. At length, slowly approaching him, she knelt at his feet and wept. A flush of joy overspread his face as he raised her.

“Where is the poor dove now?” asked he, tenderly.

“On earth! on earth!” sighed Geraldine.

“Yet ‘blessed are the poor in spirit,’” said De Grey, “‘for their’s is the kingdom of Heaven.’”

CHAPTER X.

The tomb to the blushing rose thus said,
"Of the tears upon thee, by the morning shed,
What makest thou, flower of love?"
The rose, in her turn, thus questioned the tomb,
"What makest thou in thy gulph of gloom,
Of all thou devour'st from above?"

Said the rose to the tomb, "From those precious tears,
A scent, that of amber and honey appears,
I breathe out 'mid the silence of night."
And the tomb replied to the rose, "Plaintive flower,
Of every soul that I seem to devour,
I make a blest angel of light."

Victor Hugo.

ANOTHER year had now passed, during which Geraldine had continued faithful to her duties as a Christian wife in all things, for Father Bernard was not disposed to yield to those feelings which would withdraw her from the ordinary path marked out by Providence, and our Heroine's grateful and affectionate heart was well pleased to be thus constrained to its former happy bondage, and in her turn felt surprised and uneasy in perceiving that some unusual weight of thought pressed on De Grey's mind. "Who is the disengaged and independent one now?" said she one evening, when at the end of more than an hour's silence she approached, and took her husband's hand. "I have spoken and you have not answered, I have sung and you have not listened, I have changed the flowers at the window beside you, and you have seen neither me nor them. And I do not love this last silence, for you have often sighed."

"Have I," said he, and he again sighed.

"Ah, what is it?" asked she, "have I grieved you?"

"Geraldine," said De Grey, "when I extorted your promise last year to resist the supernatural attraction given to you in prayer, I well knew that if it came from God, He would reward you tenfold for your humility and submission, while, on my part, I felt bound to redouble my prayer and other religious acts, that God would be pleased to enlighten my mind and strengthen my heart, should I have been guided by human feeling in this matter: and now," added he, with emotion, "I must farther pray for grace to resign you, my love, for you are not long for this world."

"Did God reveal this to you?" asked Geraldine, her countenance overspread with joy.

"He has given me the conviction that we are soon to part, and your soul is by far the most prepared."

"Oh, no," cried she: "it is you who are now imaginative, have you not been my guide and support through my Catholic life, and would you now seek to raise the pupil above her teacher? Dear Eustace, I have saddened your mind, and it turns on what would be your loss, and I dare not think would be yet my gain."

"Then why that radiance over your face just now?"

"You took me quite by surprise, and I thought only of God; but indeed I am not fit to approach His adorable sanctity, and I ought to desire neither life nor death, but accept of either from His hands in perfect peace. Tell me why you have this impression that we are soon to part?"

"I have been retracing all the circumstances of your spiritual life," replied De Grey, "and see with gratitude that it has been rapidly progressive. You are now humble enough for me to recall without pain to you, how lofty and independent a mind you had, when first you consented to the yoke of obedience."

"And you were a brave man to undertake the task of controlling that proud spirit," said Geraldine, smiling.

"Oh," cried De Grey also smiling, "there was an excitement and charm in it.".....

"Which," interrupted she playfully, "you feel almost tempted to regret."

"Ah, Geraldine, you think to cheat me from the records of your life, but it is now my turn to be full of serious thought, and you must listen to me. The very force of mind which had enabled you to conquer all opposition in becoming a Catholic, made it a hard matter to submit to those Catholic practices which resulted from the truths you had received. You had, as the only child of an indulgent and admiring father, been the queen of your little world, and, although you were willing to extend to me the crown-matrimonial, when it came to the yielding the sceptre, there was a struggle of the natural heart. You loved to relinquish your will to me as a boon, but not as my right; and now, sweet Geraldine, you can listen to all this without upbraiding or tears, without even a reply, therefore I may continue my comments on your spiritual history. You did not, at one time, sufficiently feel the necessity of a pure intention in the benevolent actions you

performed. The eagerness with which you sought success in every undertaking, and your emotion under any failure, proved that you had the double motive of glorifying both Almighty God and Lady de Grey. The true spirit of the hidden life was unknown to you, and that keen susceptibility to praise or blame which Catholics consider reprehensible, you had cherished as a virtuous refinement. A friend might misunderstand and misjudge you; I might appear independent and forgetful of you in my pursuits, and your wounded feelings must be soothed, and your self-love appeased. Now, has the hidden life become so dear to you, the pure motive of seeking God alone become so precious to you, you have learned so truly to bless him in failure as in success, you are so detached from self, that the next step, detachment from creatures, is already prepared, and 'the dove' will fly to Heaven, never more to return."

"Eustace," said Geraldine, "if you rest your forebodings of our parting from your too partial view of my progress towards sanctity, you need fear nothing, for the detachment of which you speak does not prevent my heart from bounding at your loved praise."

"I do not regret," continued De Grey, "having acted as I did when first you made known to me the secret of your solitary hours. We both know that the test of these favours in prayer are humility, simplicity, and peace; the mortification of our will and natural inclinations; and, above all, constant charity. A year has passed since you sacrificed, from obedience, your sensible delight in prayer, confining yourself to humble petitions for divine guidance, and I have watched you more closely than ever. Henceforth I release you! Let your thoughts soar aloft amongst the spirits of your future home. God forbid that I, who may hitherto have been favoured to assist, should now retard, your progress towards Him."

Geraldine still held her husband's hand in silence, his presentiment of their approaching parting although apparently superstitious had partly gained its influence over her mind, yet she could not realize the idea of her death. After a long pause she said: "The belief that I am soon to die would be far better for my soul, than to remain incredulous to your prognostics, for although I endeavour, through the grace of God, to spend each day as though it were to be my last, yet I should desire to make a more immediate preparation for the mighty change, if indeed it be

near." Geraldine again paused in deep thought. "I do not think, Eustace," added she at length, "that you have ever much dreaded purgatory?"

"No," replied De Grey, "I have not; for in the first place we shall have there the certainty of salvation, which, in itself, must outweigh all the pain endured. We shall at the same time be free from all temptation, for the devil has there no power, and we shall be surrounded by none but holy souls, whose every feeling and desire will tend like our own to God."

"Yes," said Geraldine, "they are termed by the Church 'holy souls,' because they can no longer sin. They are constantly suffering, yet without murmuring, or impatience, or even reluctance, although hope deferred afflicteth the soul, and their intense longing after God must be far beyond any thing we can feel in this life; for being there freed from all earthly affections, and filled with gratitude for the immense and unmerited boon of salvation, they must burn in the purifying flames of love, unknown before. Do you not think, added she, "that it is this painful desire of the soul to possess God, which has even caused the physical death of some saints? for some spiritual writers describe the soul, when in a religious transport, to be in pain, violent pain, from a sense of its detention from God."

"I think you are considering the fire of purgatory in too ethereal a sense," said De Grey, "If you make the souls there, to be in a transport, which has ever been esteemed a high favour from God."

"But like you," said Geraldine, "I consider purgatory far superior to earth, and that a soul raised in a religious transport, is like the souls there detained, because she is freed from the material part, and raised to the wholly spiritual."

"Yes," said De Grey, "but the soul detained in the flesh, is so by the laws of nature, it is God's will that the soul should be clothed with the flesh; and that his holy will should be unresistingly fulfilled in us, is the only simple, yet comprehensive desire of the christian. It is not his will, however, that the soul should become tarnished by sin, and therefore the flame of purgatory, which you would make to consist solely in the pain of detention from God, must surely be rendered more intense, by the conviction that our own corrupt will has been the cause."

"As it is not positively defined by the Church," continued De Grey, "that the element of fire is the instrument of purgation in

the middle state, we are at liberty to suppose that these flames are spiritual : still, it is the general supposition of the fathers, that the fire of purgatory is the same in quality as that of hell, differing only in duration and intensity. Saint Augustine even concludes, that the pains exceed all that the mind of man can conceive.

"It is very well," said Geraldine, "that the bulk of mankind, supported by such high authority, should take this view of the subject, which must produce by far the most lively terror to the vulgar mind. How in fact could a hardened sinner, who had never loved God, conceive any great torment, merely from the full sense of having offended, and of being deprived of him? Still as the Church permits me to do so, I believe that to a spiritual essence, there can be only spiritual torment."

I incline to this belief," said De Grey, "and that the torments of the damned cannot be material, till after the resurrection of their bodies, and the general judgment.* But now let us walk," said he, starting up; "will you come to the Abbey?"

"The Abbey?" said Geraldine, smiling, "when we were both at holy communion this morning."

"I did not say that I was going into the confessional, when there," replied De Grey, returning her smile.

"Ah! but I know you are going to take ghostly counsel, and I pray, that our good father may send away all your forebodings, and all your sighs, my own Eustace, and while you are with him, I will search along the bank of the river, for the wild plant you told me of."

They accordingly started on their evening walk, and Geraldine stole a frequent glance, to see whether her husband's countenance was losing its sadness. She was comforted to see it only thoughtful as they parted, and having fixed the extent to which she might wander, while expecting his return, she went with her basket and trowel in quest of this plant, of which De Grey had often spoken, as more beautiful than any they had yet found to adorn their last work, which was this: amongst the classical and religious figures which General Carrington had sent home from Italy, was a copy, in marble, of the beautiful kneeling Magdalen, by Canova; and Geraldine having ascertained that De Grey had no favourite project respecting the figure, besought him to admire

* Still we must be cautious of saying what can or cannot be on this awful subject, for all things are possible to God.

her plan for the penitent. In a part of the grounds, termed the wilderness, was a natural cave, which at one time had been destined for an ice-house, but neglected in favour of an excavation in a cooler spot. This cave Geraldine proposed to render a fit habitation for the Magdalen, and, on De Grey's willing co-operation, the workmen cleared and planted as the higher powers directed, and Geraldine took for her branch of the labour, the transplanting, from other parts of the wilderness, every species of wild flower, to ornament the abode of the penitent; while De Grey planned and achieved the turning the course of a small rivulet, which now flowed, with every semblance of nature's sportive will, amidst the stones, and moss, and wild flowers, around the cave. A new plant from the river or Abbey hill was a prize, and Geraldine, on this evening, wandered for some time on the river banks, hoping to discover the crimson flower of which De Grey had spoken: but not seeing any of a different species from those already transplanted, she seated herself within view of the Abbey, and was soon immersed in deep thought.

Some of her husband's expressions, with the look which accompanied them, remained especially in her mind. "Henceforth I release you! Let your thoughts soar aloft among the spirits of your future home. God forbid, that I, who have hitherto been favoured to assist, should now retard you."

"You have assisted me, dear Eustace," thought she, "and shall I ever own to myself that I can learn no more? Ah! far from me this presumption. It is not you who retard me, it is my own weak heart," and a rush of tender emotions swelled that heart, and overflowed her eyes, not unmingled with self upbraiding, that she could have lived so much apart in thought from him, during the last few months. "I knew not that he missed me," thought she; "I knew not that I had become so detached from every creature, the best, the nearest, dearest, till I found even his presence at times an interruption. I heard his footstep, and I fled—his voice, and I replied not. Ah, if it be indeed that I am beckoned onward by an Almighty hand, and hear the tones of an Almighty voice, the divine spouse will comfort the earthly one, even should the parting be by my death. Death! repeated she,—my death! or his? What is this foreboding, this knell, which is sounding in my heart. Is it the delusion of an overwrought imagination in us both, or is it a warning from our good

angels? I know not, but our God, who knows, will teach and guide me."

Nearly an hour thus passed in solitude and prayer, and when at length aroused by approaching footsteps, Geraldine beheld Mr Bernard, unaccompanied by De Grey. "Is it prudent," said he, "at this time of the evening, and by the river side, to be seated?"

"Where is he?" cried Geraldine, starting up in terror.

"Sir Eustace," replied Mr Bernard, "has charged me to conduct you homeward, on this side of the river, and promises to meet us at the bridge."

"Where is he?" repeated Geraldine, and her heart beat violently.

"He has started for the opposite bank, in search of some wild plant, which he remembers to have seen only on that side;—there! is that he? Yes! Look along the upper path,—there he is! and he sees you,—and waves his hand!"

Geraldine saw and returned the signal, and then moved homeward by the side of Mr Bernard, her steps faltering, and the palpitation of heart increasing."

"You are ill, Lady De Grey," said Mr Bernard, "you have lingered too long alone by the water side. The sight of your indisposition will grieve Sir Eustace, and make him as thoughtful as when he called at the Abbey. He looked quite cheerful when he ran off to the ferry, and promised, that in spite of the longer route, he would get the start of us."

"Let us walk faster," said Geraldine, hastening her pace.

"I will do whatever you wish," said he; and after a few minutes quicker walking, the bridge appeared in sight.

"Mr Bernard," said Geraldine, "did you intend to prolong your walk to the Hall with us?"

"I have a sick call," said he, "and after I shall have seen you safely with Sir Eustace, I must hasten on, for my penitent is at some distance, and near his end."

"I think," said she, "that you will remain with us."

"I hope," said Mr Bernard, smiling, "that you would like me to be wherever my duty lies."

"It will be with us," said Geraldine, and was then silent until they reached the appointed spot; when, in reply to some observation of Mr Bernard's, "I did not expect to see him here," said she.

"How fine the river looks to-night," said Mr Bernard.

Geraldine shuddered as she gazed on its clear and rippled surface, then suddenly clasping her hands, exclaimed, "Why loiter we here? you did not understand each other about the bridge, this is not the one he means." And she ran with a speed which Mr Bernard could scarcely equal, across a meadow which was formed in the bend of the river, and by which they arrived within a few paces of a rustic bridge long in disuse, except by the inmates of a mill near to it.

Mr Bernard, as he followed Geraldine, felt for the first time that the presentiment of evil, which filled her mind, was founded in some truth, as he had been cautioned not to trust to the bridge, by the peasant who had called him to the sick man. To Mr Bernard's joy, however, just as he overtook our heroine, they both descried the object of their solicitude descending rapidly the copsewood hill, which overhung the river, his handkerchief filled with the roots of the crimson-flowering plant; and Mr Bernard had time to shout "Do not trust the bridge, it is broken. Go back to the other."

De Grey having only caught the principal words, without the intermediate ones, which gave the true meaning, shouted in return, that his promises were not broken, and that they were quite to be trusted, and flourishing his prize over his head, he sprang from the high bank on the frail bridge.

Geraldine neither screamed nor spoke. The crash of the bridge under the impetus given to the weight of De Grey, had sounded in her brain before it fell on the outward ear. She saw him fall through the beams, and strike against the abutment of the arch; for an instant he sank in the water, but rising again, supported himself, by holding with one hand part of the bridge which remained firm, until he had untied his neckcloth, and then struck boldly for the shore. De Grey was an excellent swimmer, and when Mr Bernard saw the vigorous stroke he made towards them, he exclaimed to Geraldine, "God be praised, all is well." The distance from the opposite bank would have been trifling, had De Grey returned thither, but he turned to his wife and friend, and soon narrowed the space between himself and them, till suddenly he stopped, raised his hand in signal for assistance, and was lost to their sight.

In four minutes from that time, the boat with two men from the mill was on the spot where De Grey had sunk, and Mr Bernard, who had succeeded in arriving there by swimming, in tr

to grasp and keep afloat the lifeless form at its third and last effort to the surface of the water, was unable through exhaustion to do more than enter the boat, after it had received his friend, and was conveyed thence by the men and laid on the bank beside him.

Geraldine, who had flown to the mill for assistance, the same instant in which Mr Bernard had plunged into the river, and had watched every movement from the bank, now knelt between the two apparently lifeless bodies. That De Grey must die, she had felt convinced during the last two hours, in which from the struggle of her poor heart, and the violent action of her brain, which was a furnace of thought, she had seemed to live years. She now thought only of securing to that beloved and precious soul every spiritual aid, during the short time it might linger in its earthly tabernacle, and her agitation and grief were inexpressibly heightened by the state into which the priest had been thrown, by his generous devotion to his friend. One of the men had run back to the mill for a plank on which to place De Grey, and just as he again returned to them, Geraldine saw with fervent thanksgiving, that the restorative given by the other man to Mr Bernard was taking effect. He raised himself on one arm, and turned to gaze on his friend, whom they were now placing on the board.

"He is dead, poor gentleman," said one of the men, abruptly, "not by drowning, but by the blow;" and he pointed to the temple, in which a deep indenture had been made. "How he swam at all is a marvel."

"Ah, no," cried Geraldine "he is not dead, he is only stunned and exhausted!" and as she spoke, a gush of warm and living blood flowed from the mouth of De Grey. "Yes! by that token he lives, for the blood of the dead is stagnant."

They now bore him speedily, yet gently, forward. Geraldine supporting one arm, while Mr Bernard, by great effort, kept pace with them, holding up the other. At the mill, Geraldine found, with thankfulness, an active, kind-hearted woman, and a boy, who was immediately sent off for either of the medical men in Elverton. A blazing fire was soon made, and every thing done to restore warmth and breath to the body; but if the flowing of the blood had given proofs of life, it seemed to have been the harbinger of its extinction, for the hitherto placid features were now taking the rigid form of death.

"Can you then anoint him in this uncertainty?" said Geraldine, seeing Mr Bernard draw from his breast pocket the little case of holy oils prepared for the sick call.

"I can," he replied; and the solemn rite was administered; one of the men who was a Catholic, kneeling beside our heroine, and joining her in the responses to the litany for the dying, which then followed. Geraldine's heart had swelled with gratitude, when re-assured of the validity of this last sacrament—this "consummation of penance," in which the very root of evil is destroyed—although the dear object was insensible to the inestimable benefit bestowed, and a few scalding drops gathered in her hitherto tearless eyes, as she listened to the priestly dismissal:—"Depart Christian soul out of this world, in the name of God the Father Almighty, who created thee; in the name of Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who suffered for thee; in the name of the Holy Ghost, who sanctified thee; in the name of the angels, archangels, thrones, and dominations, cherubim and seraphim; in the name of the patriarchs and prophets, of the holy apostles and evangelists; of the holy martyrs and confessors, of the holy monks and hermits, of the holy virgins; and of all the saints of God: let thy place be this day in peace, and thy abode in holy Sion, through Christ our Lord. Amen." "I recommend thee, dear brother, to Almighty God, and leave thee to his mercy whose creature thou art; that having paid the common debt by surrendering thy soul, thou mayest return to thy Maker, who formed thee out of the earth. May all the ministers of hell be filled with confusion and shame, and let no evil spirit dare to stop thee on thy way. Christ Jesus be thy deliverer, who was crucified for thee. Christ Jesus, Son of the living God, place thee in his garden of paradise, and may he, the true Shepherd, own thee for one of his flock: may he absolve thee from all thy sins, and place thee at his right hand in the inheritance of his elect. We pray it may be thy happy lot to behold thy Redeemer face to face, to be ever in his presence, and in the vision of that truth which is the joy of the blessed. And thus placed among those happy spirits, mayest thou be ever filled with heavenly sweetness. Amen."

Before the prayers were ended, the principal surgeon in Elverton arrived. He cast one look at De Grey, shook his head, and then turning to the priest, whispered his rapid questions. Geraldine drew a little back while the surgeon examined

whether life were extinct, but in a few instants, advancing, she gently removed his hand, and bending over her husband, held up her finger in token of silence. Mr Thompson replaced his hand, however, for an instant, then removing it, said softly, "All is over ;" and Mr Bernard uttered with deep emotion,— "To thee, Lord, we recommend the soul of thy servant Eustace, that being dead to this world, he may live to thee: and whatever sins he has committed through human frailty, we beseech thee in thy goodness mercifully to pardon, through Christ our Lord. Amen."....."Grant, O God, that while we here lament the departure of thy servant, we may ever remember that we are most certainly to follow him. Give us grace to prepare for that last hour by a good life, that we may not be surprised by sudden death, but be ever watching when thou shalt call, that so with the Spouse we may enter into eternal glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

As Mr Bernard finished these prayers, both he and the surgeon endeavoured to lead Geraldine away from the mortal remains of her husband, but she calmly told them that the last sad duties belonged to her, and that she would devolve them on no one ; and acquainting Mr Thompson with the risk Mr Bernard had incurred, bade him take charge of the living. This, Mr Thompson did most effectually, by kindly undertaking to drive directly to the cottage, whither the priest was bound, having recommended to the latter to accept the offer made him by the miller of a bed in the cottage. Geraldine begged Mr Thompson to convey the sad intelligence to the Hall ; but with strict orders from herself, for no one to come to her until the morning, except Mr Hilton, whom she would wish to see directly. With the miller's wife for her assistant; Geraldine then devoted her whole thoughts to the dear departed, and the kind woman consented to her wish, that as the corpse was to remain there only during the night, it should not be removed to any other room. Within an hour the steward arrived, and Geraldine arranged with him for the early removal, on the following morning, of the body of De Grey to the Hall. The miller's wife having agreed to sit up with Geraldine, Mr Hilton went immediately into the town, to expedite his melancholy commission, and Mr Bernard remained with our heroine in the chamber of death.

"Tell me," said Geraldine, in a low voice, "is the presence of God more immediately on the spot when the soul quits the

body ; or is it, that the impediment of the flesh being then removed, the soul enters into the omnipresence of the Deity ?”

“ The latter is correct,” said Mr Bernard ; “ God is everywhere.”

“ In one moment,” continued Geraldine, “ has the soul of my Eustace entered into the beatific vision, has been judged, and then, perhaps, parted from the God, he, for the first time, could fully know and love. Alas ! alas ! where art thou, precious soul ?”

“ Be comforted ;—nay, more, lift up your heart in thankfulness,” said Mr Bernard ; “ sudden as was the summons to the judgment-seat, it found the soul prepared ; and, although I could not with authority pronounce that it has entered into the eternal blessedness of the just made perfect, I feel that short, if any, will be the period of detention from the God who reigned paramount in his faithful heart.”

“ I was conscious,” said Geraldine, “ of the moment in which his soul entered on eternity. I knew that, although my dull mortal ears could not hear it, yet the sentence was then passed for endless joy or woe, on the best, the dearest of friends, and my heart cried for him, ‘ mercy, mercy !’ for on that alone can man rely. I am comforted,” added she, “ by your assurance of his acceptance ; not that I feared for him the condemnation of the wilful sinner. Yet never did the unattainable sanctity and purity of God appear so clearly to my mind—never have I felt, with such trembling awe, that nothing defiled can enter heaven. Blessed to me now is the remembrance of my husband’s fidelity to all the means of grace afforded him by the Church : his constant and loving surrender of himself to the will of God in all things ; his desire to unite his sufferings, whether of mind or body, to those of his blessed Redeemer ; his sincere and deep humility. Ah ! when we know that by thus faithfully responding to the grace freely given us, we can claim the sure promises of God, and that by patience in suffering, labours of love, austerities, and mortifications, we can anticipate our purgatory, and in death fly instantly to our God, what can seem difficult or painful to us ?”

On the following morning the body of De Grey was borne to the Hall, there to await the time for interment in the vault of the abbey.

During the visits made to De Grey’s paternal inheritance, our heroine had become acquainted with a lady in that immediate

neighbourhood, whose pious and benevolent life, literary and elegant tastes, and the high esteem in which she was held by Mr Bernard, had so insured the friendship and confidence of Geraldine and her husband, that during the last two years, Isabel Lester, who had little expected to revive thus the ardent attachments of earlier life, became a constant visitor at the Moat or Hall. To this congenial friend did our heroine now turn, and a confidential messenger was despatched to her, and also to De Grey's venerable relative at Burnleigh.

The widowed Geraldine, much exhausted in mind and body, continued through that day in a state of almost stupor, but in the evening was roused by the presence of Lady Winefride, and as she looked in her aged countenance, which quivered with emotion, and remembered the all but maternal tie which had bound her heart with that of her nephew, she forgot her own still greater loss, and strove to be the comforter.

"I have prayed for greater strength than I seem now to possess," said Lady Winefride, "for I came not to weep, but to receive and soothe your tears, my poor child."

"I cannot weep," said Geraldine, "I am stunned, and feel nothing." Yet, as Lady Winefride drew her by degrees to speak, not of the horrors of yesterday's scene, but of the qualities and piety of De Grey, and of the general loss sustained, she began to lose the wild melancholy of her air and countenance, and to evince something of the natural grief which her tender friends desired to see. While they were sitting together, a tap was given at the door, and Jane Saunders, who was in the room, answering the summons, a whispered debate took place, whether or not to show something to "my lady."

"What is it, Jane," said Lady Winefride.

"The head man at the mill has sent this for my lady," replied Jane; "but it is odd to be insisting on her seeing such things as flowers at this time of her affection."

Lady Winefride, however, took from the footman's hand a China flower-pot, in which grew several wild plants: their flowers, which were of a rich crimson, being tied to, and clustering round a painted stick. The delicate care and sympathy which this evinced, from persons of a class not in general prone to the sensibilities of grief, was felt by the grateful heart of Geraldine, for well she recognized these flowers. She bent

over them, and the spring was touched which opened the flood-gates of her sorrow.

"I did not remark till this moment what the flower was," said Jane to Lady Winefride; "but it is all in keeping with my lady's grief, it is the flower of 'Love lies bleeding.'"

"Jane," said our heroine at length, "there was a handkerchief—"

"There was, my lady; it has been returned. It was one of those marked with your hair."

"Take it," said Geraldine, "and bid the miller and his wife keep it in remembrance of the virtues of the dead, and of the gratitude of the living. Dear aunt," added she, "shall I conduct you now to the room where our Eustace lies?"

Lady Winefride had only waited till the proposal should come from Geraldine, and they now together visited the chamber of death, and gazed on the countenance where the parting soul had left the impress of its acceptance with God. After some time spent in prayer, they withdrew, to allow free entrance to the train of devout poor, who had, as if by general impulse, flocked to pray around the body of De Grey; and as these, for the sake of order, were admitted in small numbers at a time, it was not until a late hour that the last were dismissed, and the household resumed their watchings, two at a time, being relieved each hour. Geraldine had consented to retire to rest, but she had fixed on her own hour to watch with her faithful Isabel, without the knowledge of Lady Winefride, who might either have opposed it, or have offered to be with her, which she did not wish, and she laid her injunctions upon Isabel, that she should remain in the adjoining room until she should be summoned. At the hour of midnight Geraldine returned to the chamber of death, bearing a case which contained the correspondence between herself and De Grey during their short engagement, and the few intervals of separation which had occurred during their four years' union. Across the case she had thrown her long hair, which she had just cut off, and she now laid both the letters and hair beside him in the coffin, saying, "My God, I desire from this moment to consecrate my whole being to thee, and that henceforth this dear being may live in my heart only as he is absorbed in thee, to whom it is due. Thou hast taught me the weakness of this heart, and therefore I rely not on any strength of my own, but

wholly on thy powerful grace, which has hitherto so wonderfully supported me."

Geraldine well knew that these letters would become tenfold more precious when the hand that wrote, and the heart and head that dictated, them, were mouldering in the tomb, and she therefore made the sacrifice while it was comparatively slight. She arose from her knees, and bent over the coffin, and a slight shudder ran through her frame, as she perceived a change to have taken place. She looked more intently on the countenance, which a few hours since had preserved its noble outline and heavenly expression, and saw that the full eyelid had sunk, and the marble whiteness of the skin was discoloured. On the wounded temple especially, corruption had begun its work : and a rush of tender remembrances, and the full sense of her bereavement, mingled with pity and remorse, overcame her as she looked on the letters which, in the previous elevation of her thoughts, she had renounced. She placed her hand on De Grey's unchanged and clustering locks, and the strong and natural wish, which she had hitherto denied herself, of keeping one of them, returned with such force, that drawing forth her scissors, she prepared to select a curl, when a sudden mysterious terror, unknown before, made her recoil. Deeply impressed with awe at this token, as it seemed, that her attempt was displeasing to the departed spirit, it was some minutes before she could reason herself into the contrary belief ; but having at length done so, she again leaned over the corpse, when the same mysterious terror returned with such force, that, shrinking back, she sought, with faltering steps, the door, and ere she could open it, sank insensible on the floor.

When Geraldine recovered, she found herself lying on her bed, with Lady Winefride and Isabel on each side of her. The former gently reproached her, for undertaking what was beyond her strength, and then tried to banish the painful subject ; but our heroine, fearing lest this weakness on her part might produce a bad effect on Isabel, informed them both of the real cause of her fainting, adding, " I have been led by the grace of God to desire, for the rest of my days, to be wholly consecrated to him. He has given me strength under this affliction, which has seemed to me a token that he accepts my desire. In resigning my first and dearest earthly affections, I have wished to make of them a perfect holocaust, and for this end I determined to

resign, with the loved object, every thing that should render the sacrifice imperfect. So long as I was faithful to this feeling, I was so raised in spirit to that of the dear departed, as scarcely to dwell on the mortal remains. I have spent hours alone in that room by night as by day, and never till I relapsed into fond regret did I experience any awful fear. God then rebuked me, as it were, by the same hovering spirit, before which my own trembled and was lost."

The day on which the remains of Eustace de Grey were borne to the vault beneath the chapel of the Abbey, a multitude of all classes and of all denominations of Christians, joined the Catholics of Elverton, being desirous, not only to show their respect for the dead, but their sympathy likewise for the living. Several private friends had arrived also at the Hall, and Geraldine consented to see them, and to listen to them, and to do all that was required of her; for the strength so wonderfully given her continued, and she felt assured would continue, so long as it should be required for the fulfilment of any duty. Her uncle Edmund attended the funeral, and the Warden received her on her return from her sad office of chief mourner, with his warmest tone and look of approbation, at the self-control and courage she evinced. This courage, he trusted, would continue, for it was unaccompanied by hurry or excitement, and appeared to result from the calm surrender of her happiness into the hands of God. After the departure of her uncle and Mr Everard, who, with the faithful steward, had conveyed a handsome reward to the inmates of the mill, and had relieved her of all painful business, except the one letter to General Carrington, Geraldine had still the comfort of Lady Winefride's, and of Isabel's congenial society, but she did not require this constantly, and would unconsciously remain for hours in thought, or occupied by the perusal of some deep works of mystical divinity, which Mr Bernard, for the first time, placed in her hands. That Geraldine intended, or rather hoped, to enter the religious life, was Isabel's firm persuasion, but Lady Winefride doubted whether such were the will of God; and while these two attached friends discoursed together, on the object of their solicitude, a change was taking place in her state of feeling, as painful as it was mysterious.

CHAPTER XI.

The mystic sounds 'mid silence that abide,
The whisperings hoarse of wilder'd memory.

To the elevation of Geraldine's thoughts, and the attendant peace of her heart, now succeeded interior trials the most acute. Instead of that immediate presence of God, in which she seemed to live, move, and have her being, she appeared far removed from him,—nor was this desolation all. There came, like strokes of fire across her heart and brain, the self-upbraiding thought, that she had caused the death of her husband. Had she not often wished to live for God alone, and had not that continued wish been equivalent to a prayer for his decease? Then came the vivid remembrance of every word, or look, or even silence, that might have grieved him, followed by the last scene of his life. She saw his animated countenance, and manly form, vigorous in recovered hopes; she again heard his joyous shout, and saw him leap on the fatal plank, receive the cruel blow from the fall, and yet swim towards her. Oh! had he not done so, but turned from her to the nearer bank, the blood-vessels of the chest would not have burst:—and it was she who, by her ill-timed presence, had thus hurried him into eternity!—she, who so well knew his thoughts on death, and the preparation he would have desired to make. Had he done so, his spirit would have flown direct to God; but now it pines, and suffers! and as she rested on these harrowing thoughts, the wail of the 'Miserere,' as she had heard it in the Sistine Chapel, five years before, seemed to float around her, and in it his voice could be distinguished. The recurrence at shorter intervals, and then the continuance of these agonizing thoughts, gave a troubled restless motion to her eyes, and a wild air to her whole manner, which deeply affected and alarmed the few who were admitted to see her; and at length she revealed to Mr Bernard, that she expected to lose her senses under this mental trial. "I resigned my best and dearest friend," cried she, "to what I thought the

will of God, but I am now harassed by the belief, that it was not the will of God, but that in anger he gave me my own will, and that I have killed De Grey."

"Have you struggled against these thoughts?" said Mr Bernard.

"I have," she replied; "at first I believed them to come from the enemy, but now they appear to be truth."

"You must still believe them to come from the enemy of your soul," said Mr Bernard. "In the eternal councils of God, the term of your husband's life was fixed; and to soften the bereavement to you, a strengthening grace was previously vouchsafed you, by which you were enabled to love God supremely, and the creature only in him. This, his great mercy, the enemy is endeavouring to hide from your eyes, that he may disturb and wound your soul. Do not trust yourself to reason with the tempter; say to him, 'Get thee hence, Satan!'"

"But," said Geraldine, "it is very true, that during several months, I have wished that I could consecrate myself wholly to God, and what was this, but wishing the death of my husband? Oh! Mr Bernard," cried she, suddenly, "had we gone over that first bridge, and joined him on the bank where he then was, his precious life would have been preserved."

"Had Sir Eustace not ventured to cross the water, Almighty God would have employed some other means to fulfil his irrevocable design," said Mr Bernard. "Do you believe that the purposes of God can be frustrated by our little plans? or, that He requires us for their fulfilment?"

"When I look on my affliction in that light," said Geraldine, "my heart is at peace, because to fulfil the adorable will of God, is all I desire; but to have led Eustace into danger, instead of saving him, is agony to me."

"Remember," said Mr Bernard, "that if the sight of you induced him to attempt to reach the farthest bank, you were there by his own request."

Geraldine only replied by deep sighs.

"Lady de Grey," said Mr Bernard, "I have scarcely ever attended a death-bed, where the minds of the affectionate attendants were not harassed by the afflicting thought of some mismanagement on their part. The only way to meet these painful interior suggestions, is by the firm conviction, that if the intention be pure, there is no act, on the part of the creature, which

has not fulfilled the will of the Creator. I once witnessed an extraordinary instance of faith under a trial of this kind. A Catholic gentleman who was one of my penitents was on the eve of marriage, when he was seized with a violent fever. His own family, consisting of a mother and two sisters, attended him night and day, but his affianced bride was not permitted by her parents to incur the risk of seeing him, till, at length, having overcome their fears, she visited the sick room. The patient had been that morning pronounced out of danger, and to gratify his new nurse, she was left by the family to sit alone by him, and to give him his fever draught. She gave him laudanum by mistake, and he never spoke again. In the midst of the lamentations, outcries, and upbraidings of the distracted family, she stood as if stunned by grief, till, at length, raising her hands and eyes to Heaven, she said, 'Lord, as thou willest, in the manner thou willest, and by whom thou willest.' She afterwards said to me, 'I would have given my heart's blood to save him, but God, who sees that heart, will not let it repine.'

"I think of this young lady," added Mr Bernard, "when I hear the customary 'Ah! if another medical person had but been called in,' or, on the contrary, 'would that we had never consulted other advice.' 'If he had but been sooner moved;' or, 'would that he had never been moved, &c.' All this is opposed to the principle of true simple faith; for I repeat it, supposing that a better plan had been acted upon, God would still have accomplished His inscrutable designs, in spite of prudence and skill, and every human device."

"I cannot," said Geraldine, "derive all the comfort you expect from the heroic faith of the lady whose example you propose to me, because her heart absolved her, and mine does not absolve me."

"Why did you fly with such speed from one bridge to the other?" said Mr Bernard. "Was it not to warn or rescue your husband from danger? Why did you in like manner seek the boat and men at the mill? Would you not willingly have risked your own life to save his?"

"Not only have risked it, but have freely given it," replied she, but her sighs continued.

"The lady, whose example I proposed to you," said Mr Bernard, "had to bear the reality of that trial, which, with you, is but imaginary. She was actually the cause (humanly

aking) by which the soul of the being she best loved, was at once launched into eternity !”

“ But she had never wished his death,” repeated our poor heroine, the wild melancholy returning to her eye.

“ Neither have you,” replied Mr Bernard ; “ and, however you may deceive and bewilder yourself, by an over-timorous conscience, you cannot in this matter deceive and bewilder your confessor. I now put you under obedience, to drive these thoughts from your mind, as instantly and resolutely as you would do those contrary to faith or purity, and I warn you, that if you do not obey, you will actually receive the punishment due to self-will ; you will become, on that one topic, insane.”

“ I think it very likely,” said Geraldine, “ for insanity is caused by the perpetually dwelling on one point, and that is what I have done lately.”

“ It is not likely, unless by your own fault,” said Mr Bernard ; “ and remember that any indulgence for the future will be more than imprudent, it will be highly reprehensible. Exert the force of mind given you by Almighty God. Open your heart to all his rich and abundant gifts, and merit the return of interior peace. Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”

“ Do you think,” said Geraldine, “ that this extreme pain and desolation of the soul is sent me as a punishment for my sins, or as a trial of my fidelity ?”

“ In whichever light we view it,” said Mr Bernard, “ you may draw from it great profit : looking at this withdrawal from you of the light and joy you have hitherto enjoyed, as a punishment due to you for many transgressions, you may view in it a portion of your purgatory, and receive it with the perfect submission and love which fills those holy souls who are there detained. How often have you said that you desired your soul might here go through its purifying process, and so in death fly instantly to God ; this can be in no way better effected than by interior trials and affliction. Compared with the internal cross of dereliction, all exterior crosses are light ; and whether you bear it in expiation of the past, or as a proof of your fidelity for the future, rest assured that God’s fatherly love has laid it on you ; that he hears all your sighs, receives all your tears, and having made you a partaker in the sufferings of his Son, will bid you rejoice with him in glory.”

Geraldine left her spiritual father with a mind less oppressed; for a slight glimpse of light seemed discernible in the hitherto impenetrable gloom, discovering to her "how a desolate person ought to offer herself into the hands of God;" and by that light she prayed, "O Lord God, O Holy Father, be thou now and for ever blessed, for as thou wilt so it has happened, and what thou dost is always good.

"O just Father, holy and always to be praised, the hour is come for thy servant to be tried. O Father, worthy of all love, it is fitting that thy servant should at this time suffer something for thee.'"

Mr Bernard had recommended to her not to remain too long in solitude, but to have some friend generally with her, and she followed this recommendation as a mean to enable her better to obey his positive commands, of driving from her those agonizing thoughts which had gained such power over her. She had now a personal interest in the truth, that the progress of a spiritual life does not so much consist in having the grace of consolation, as in bearing the want of it with humility, patience, and resignation: so as not to grow remiss in the exercise of prayer at that time, nor to omit any accustomed good work.

Months passed on, and our courageous Geraldine went through all her duties with the same exactness as when they had been delightful to her. She earnestly desired such purity of motive, as not to love God for the sake of his favours, but for his adorable perfections; and to be faithful to this love in tribulation and anguish, becoming a partaker of his sufferings, and admitted to drink of his bitter chalice. Resisting therefore all temptation to disgust, and consenting to feel the utmost aridity and weariness, she continued her usual exercises of mental and vocal prayer, attended mass daily, with the greater part of her household, received every week the Holy Communion, and either visited, with Isabel, the schools, the workhouse, infirmary, and the private dwellings of the sick poor, or engaged with her in some work for the altar, that should occupy her thoughts. Her depression continued, but she made no violent efforts to dispel it, leaving its termination to the inscrutable wisdom of her God; and being thus faithful to the grace of resignation given her, it led the way to the return, at length, of her wonted cheerful calm. Poor Isabel, who had wept, and suffered much from

sympathy, now knew no bounds to her joy, but Geraldine reminded her that they must not depend too much on the prosperity of the soul, but remain humble, knowing how quickly it may be changed into adversity. But although Geraldine had learned to rejoice with trembling, still she did rejoice, feeling that if God vouchsafed her the return of his consolations, she was bound to offer him a heart full of thanksgiving, and leaving to him the duration of this renewed peace, to let nothing be wanting on her part to merit its continuance.

Lady Winefride now took leave of the Hall, to return to her home duties, which had been delegated to others till Geraldine should appear able to spare her. On the day of her departure, our heroine proposed, for the first time, to walk in the pleasure grounds, and she led Isabel to the cave of the Magdalen, in the wilderness; the crimson flowers had been planted at the entrance, and were recovering this their second removal. Geraldine entered the cave, and there, unexpectedly to herself, and with grief to her friend, she had one of those bursts of emotion, which, however alarming to witness, are beneficial to the sufferer, especially where sorrow has been aggravated by interior trials.

CHAPTER XII.

In monasteries the weak and timorous may be happily sheltered, the weary may repose, and the penitent may meditate. Those retreats of prayer and contemplation have something so congenial to the mind of man, that, perhaps, there is scarcely one that does not purpose to close his life in pious abstraction, with a few associates serious as himself.

Dr Johnson.

AFTER the departure of Lady Winefride, Isabel being left sole guardian, continued to watch her friend with anxiety, listening for the slightest sigh, and marking each passing shadow on her brow. Geraldine appeared not only calm but cheerful; and this blessed change had lasted several weeks, yet she was no longer what she had been. "Perhaps," thought Isabel, "I am wrong to expect this:" and on her thinking aloud one day on this

subject, Geraldine comforted her by the assurance of her happiness.

"You must not be anxious because I remain so long silent, Isabel," said she, "I am not more silent than yourself."

"I am silent," replied Isabel, "because I have nothing to say."

"You have always plenty of wise things to say," said Geraldine, smiling.

"No, indeed," said Isabel, "I am thought wise merely because I know how to be silent; but you, dear friend, can speak, and confirm the opinion."

"Alas! I have said more foolish things than wise ones," said Geraldine, "and may well learn thus late the advantages of holy silence. Be comforted to know, dear Isabel, that of the many thoughts which now occupy my mind, some are full of happiness, and none painful."

"Tell me those which are full of happiness," said Isabel.

"They relate," replied Geraldine, "to the dedication, which I hope to make, of my whole being to God."

Isabel looked first at Geraldine, then round the costly and luxurious apartment: her thoughts then flew to the convent, where she had been a pensioner, and she shook her head with a meaning which Geraldine could not mistake. "You think," said she, "that I shall find the exterior hardships of the religious life too much, from my previous habits of self-indulgence?"

"I fear so," said Isabel. "The early education of Catholics and Protestants differs greatly. The former are inured to practise exterior as well as interior self-denial at a very early age. They are taught to bear cold and hunger, and to dread a luxurious life, as imparting its effects to the soul."

"Come with me," cried Geraldine, rising, and leading the way to the apartment next to her boudoir, and which Isabel knew to be her sleeping-room.

"I see nothing here to make me change my opinion," said Isabel; "this is a room more fitted for a fairy queen than a saintly nun."

Geraldine smiled, and permitted Isabel to amuse herself for some time at her expense, as she made the tour of the room, examining and commenting on each luxury she beheld. At length, taking from within a cabinet a large key, Geraldine unlocked the door of a light closet, and as Isabel entered, the door

was closed on her, and she found herself alone in the facsimile of a cell belonging to some austere order. A small iron bedstead, without curtains, and with a straw bed, one chair, and small table of deal, an iron crucifix, with cup for holy water hanging against the wall, completed the furniture of this closet or cell, of which the dimensions might be about eight feet long by five or six wide.

After leaving Isabel for some time to enjoy alone this surprise, Geraldine found her kneeling before the crucifix, bathed in tears.

"These are tears of joy, I trust, at my progress thus far?" said our heroine, as Isabel arose and threw her arms round her neck.

"How long have you slept on that dreadful little bed?" said Isabel.

"For several weeks," replied Geraldine, "but I began prudently and by degrees. At first I lay only one hour on this little bed, and took my actual night's rest on my accustomed down pillows and French mattress; but by the end of the first week, I found myself awaking from a good sleep on the straw bed, and now I am independent of any other."

"But the weather is becoming intensely cold," pleaded Isabel, "and at the risk of life must you endure this unnecessary rigour? If you intend to become a Sister of Charity, you need not attempt the austerities of the contemplative orders, for the hardships of that life are sufficient, and more than sufficient, to satisfy your desire of mortification."

"I do not know that I shall become a Sister of Charity," said Geraldine; "on the contrary, I have many doubts on that subject, and desire to know more of all the religious orders before I decide."

"They are all good and holy," observed the "Convent girl."

"But the Benedictine order best of all," said Geraldine, smiling.

"I am bound to think it one of the best," replied Isabel, "as all must do who have been educated by those religious. The recluse, who educates others for the world, seems to me to be leading a most pious life."

"I have the highest respect," said Geraldine, "for those who, having themselves abjured the world, can prepare others for it, without losing the spirit of their higher state."

"It is quite essential to the well-being of the Catholic body," said Isabel, "that the females of the higher ranks should be educated in a manner suited to their station, without endangering the far more important cause of piety: and for this end, how great a blessing is it that ladies of the same rank as their pupils should be called, by the grace of God, to devote themselves to this good work. They must possess great advantages over the most amiable and accomplished mistress of a boarding-school, whose mind is generally harassed by contending cares and anxieties; and who with children or other relations dependent on her exertions, can give to her pupils but a divided heart. The nun, on the contrary, gives them her unremitting labours from the noblest and purest motives; looking on them as sacred deposits, to be guarded from spot or blemish, and strengthened by precept and example for the dangers they are to encounter in the world. And how endearing is the tie," continued Isabel, "thus formed between the mistress and the pupil! Equals in birth and association, the experience of the former must be far more willingly received by her young listener than if she exorted from theory alone."

"Isabel," said Geraldine, "you speak with the eloquence of a vocation."

"No," said Isabel, "I have no vocation at present but to comfort you, my dearest friend."

"In which you respond most faithfully to the inspiration," said Geraldine; "and may God reward you, for I cannot."

"You must not think," continued Isabel, "that I forget the merit of other orders devoted to tuition,—the Ursulines especially."

"I believe your mind and charity expansive enough," said Geraldine, "to see the merit of every order, and to admire with me their number and variety, among which the most opposite dispositions may find themselves suited; and all unite to praise and glorify God, edify mankind, and secure their own salvation. Now, as much as I admire those orders which are devoted to education, I feel no direct sympathy with, but, on the contrary, the greatest repugnance to them. I cannot teach any thing for the silly world I renounce; and to all that may be said respecting the accomplishments I possess, I reply, that I devote them to sacred subjects, and thereby offer them more directly to God. I have not the same, or indeed any, repugnance to teach the

poor, because the simple means are soon attained of enabling them to receive religious instruction, the imparting which could never weary me."

"And yet," said Isabel, "the accomplishments you cannot bear to teach for the 'silly world you renounce,' might tend to glorify the Almighty by giving influence to the characters of your pupils. To those destined to mix in society, as at present constituted, they would extend the sphere of usefulness, by giving lustre to example, and weight to precept, thus promoting God's honour and their neighbour's good. Much, I think, could be said on this subject,—the preparing the daughters of the higher Catholics for their arduous and important duties. 'Happy is the man,' says a French poet, 'to whom God grants a holy mother;' and surely, without the intellectual attainments that society demands, a Catholic wife in the present day would hardly realize the picture of the valiant woman in *Proverbs*, whose husband is honourable at the gates when he sitteth among senators.* But if you have so great a repugnance to elegant tuition," continued Isabel, "and still have doubts respecting the order of charity, to which institute do you incline? surely not to the austere orders of Mount Carmel, La Trappe, or the Poor Clares?"

"There is one convent of the Benedictines," said Geraldine, "where, besides the duties of the choir, there is perpetual adoration before the blessed Sacrament, of an hour assigned in turn to each nun; and, instead of any school attached to the convent, they engage in every variety of work for the service of the altar. I have seen, in various parts of the kingdom, vestments and antependiums beautifully embroidered by these religious; and the calm and holy contemplation of that convent strongly attracts me."

"But surely," said Isabel, "you would not there find sufficient mental occupation; and the powers given you by God would lie dormant."

"How could the powers of my mind lie dormant," said Geraldine, "when they would be exercised in the perpetual contemplation and praise of God?"

"But you would be comparatively useless to your fellow-creatures," said Isabel.

"Why, my 'Convent girl,'" said Geraldine, "is it you

who are talking like a Protestant, of the inutility of the Contemplative Orders! Never has a country been more spiritually prosperous than when its holy bands of contemplatives were imploring blessings on it; and well has it been said, that many a victory has been gained, less by the tactics of generals and valour of soldiers, than by the hands, raised like those of Moses, during the combat; and this is particularly applicable to the convent in question, where all their devotions and austerities are, besides securing their own salvation, devoted to the reconversion of England. I think, that instead of any more Reformation meetings, that party had far better burn down this convent, and stop the prayers of its community, as the best means of impeding the present rapid spread of Catholicity."

"Indeed, I do not think the contemplative orders useless to their fellow-creatures," said Isabel, "for I trust much more to prayer than to action; but, I think with you, that different orders are for different minds. To those whom God calls to the wholly contemplative life, He has imparted a peculiar grace; to those destined for a union of the active and contemplative, He also gives the required powers, and to the wholly active——"

"Spare me, Isabel," interrupted Geraldine, seating herself, and folding her hands together, "the very mention of a life of perpetual motion makes me feel as though I could kneel in the sanctuary for ever."

"I should not have said wholly," but "more active," said Isabel, smiling, "for in no religious order is there the 'perpetual motion' you dread. The Sisters of Charity during their noviciate, make daily an hour and a half meditation, an hour of spiritual reading, besides other sacred duties: and after their profession, have their allotted times of spiritual refreshment, in visits to the Blessed Sacrament, Meditation, Examens, Rosary, and other prayers. They have also a strict rule of silence, except for two hours in the day, besides their annual, monthly, and other spiritual retreats, and who was it," continued Isabel, "raised enthusiasm even in my sluggish feelings, by her glowing picture of the daughters of St Vincent, and has so often told me, that she could not die happy, until she had fulfilled all the spiritual and corporal works of mercy?"

"It was I," cried Geraldine; "I felt and still feel, that however holy may be the prayers, and acceptable the austerities, of the contemplative orders, to none are there such sure promises

given as to those who serve Christ in the suffering members of his mystical body ; for to those expressly will He say, ' Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world : for I was hungry, and you gave me to eat ; thirsty, and you gave me to drink ; naked, and you clothed me ; sick and in prison, and you came unto me. Verily I say unto you, that, inasmuch as you did it unto the least of my brethren, you did it unto me.' "

" And how is it possible," said Isabel, " that with the strong impressions in favour of this order, you can think of any other ? "

" Because," said Geraldine, " on the other hand, I remember those equally encouraging words, ' But one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that better part which shall not be taken from her.' "

" Indeed, it would be hard to decide," said Isabel, " between the two blessed sisters. "

" And for that reason," said Geraldine, " I wish there were an order in which these two states of life were united, and why should not that be ? In the cloistered orders, the active duties of the community occupy several hours of the day ; and why should it be supposed, that these duties being out of the enclosure, for instance, at the hospitals, prisons, and private dwellings of the poor, should render them incompatible with those of the choir ? "

" Isabel," cried she, suddenly, with all the animation of earlier days, " I must found an order, for, notwithstanding the number and variety in the Church, I find no one that exactly combines all that my heart desires. "

Isabel, who watched the change in her friend's countenance, and therefore wished to prolong the subject, replied, smiling, " that she should like a sketch of this order, for, that she could not imagine how one institute could combine all the desires of any heart, especially such a heart as Geraldine's. "

" This institute," said Geraldine, " shall be a union of the active and contemplative life. In the former I will adopt all that is effected by the blessed Sisters of Charity, and in the latter the choir office, and several other duties of the cloistered orders. I have been frequently with Lady Winefride to the convent where dear Angela is now first-class mistress of the young ladies' school. If she can combine the active duties of tuition with the long divine office, why should not my nuns attend the hospitals

and private dwellings of the poor at regular hours ? Now, let us return to the library, and I will give you a written sketch of what I mean, and I will make you so far satisfied with my plans, as to feel within you the stirrings of a vocation, which, however, must not advance too rapidly, and outstrip me who am fettered by obedience to father Bernard."

Had Geraldine been aware at this time of all that had passed between Mr Bernard and De Grey during their last interview, she would have found it still more difficult to refrain from deciding on the order she hoped either to join or to found ; but Mr Bernard, in the present state of her feelings, which were still jarred and excited by the terror and grief she had sustained, would not mention anything that might bias them too strongly ; and while, like Isabel, he encouraged her to think of the religious life as that to which God visibly called her, he had induced her to keep her mind, if possible, from any determined preference. During the raging of the cholera in Elverton, mentioned in the opening of this narrative, Mr Bernard had applied to a congregation of Sisters of Charity in France, called the "Daughters of Saint Joseph," for three of their members, to assist him. Those selected by the mother-superior were English women, and on their return to France, one of them had informed Mr Bernard, that should he ever establish an institute of their kind in Elverton, her sisters and herself would join it, having always hoped to return to their native country, where their labours would be doubly required, and like all these pious Sisters in France, being bound to their congregation only by yearly vows. Since that period Mr Bernard had been constantly cherishing the hope, that the time would come when a convent for religious sisters, devoted to the sick and ignorant poor, should arise, as the chapel and priest's house had done, within the ruins of the abbey ; and in the mean time, several pious and benevolent ladies had given him their services amongst the poor at Elverton, with the promise of an entire dedication of themselves to this life when a regular order should be established.

De Grey, aware that his friend and pastor had this convent much at heart, often conversed with him on the subject, and on the eventful evening recounted, he spoke more decidedly of his own feelings as connected with it. "These Abbey lands," said he, "were given by my ancestor Arthur de Grey, in perpetuity, to the monks of the Cistercian order here established, in the

reign of Henry the Second. At the revolt against the Church, these lands were parcelled out to lay apostates, together with all that the Abbey afforded of treasure and relics. You well know how I returned thanks to God, that, with the remnant of my hereditary fortune, I was enabled to purchase, seven years ago, this sacred spot from the corporation of the town, and that, but for the long contested struggle for the property left to me by my uncle, Mr Richmond, I should long since have aided you in the re-establishment of a religious order within these walls. A thickly populated country is now around us, and other circumstances make it advisable that an active order of women should succeed to the learned contemplatives of Saint Bernard. You have reasoned me into the belief that I am not to be left the desolated being I expected, and if, indeed, I am still to retain the wife I have been given grace to resign, I can only spare from my fortune sufficient for the erection of the building; but if this mysterious impression prove true, and I be left a widower, then rely on a foundation for your community. Last of my race, I require no more than the little estate of the Moat while living, and to lie when dead in the vault beneath this Abbey."

Mr Bernard did not intend to conceal eventually this conversation from the widowed Geraldine, but merely to delay imparting it to her until her mind should have regained strength sufficient to hold the balance equal, while he should represent to her the sign, which, in this spontaneous wish of her husband's, seemed to him to be given her, that she should accomplish the good work De Grey had projected. This silence on the part of Mr Bernard was caused likewise by conscientious and delicate feelings, which led him to avoid even the appearance of working on a mind and heart rendered by grief susceptible of every religious impression.

At the expiration of the first year of her widowhood, Geraldine wrote to the superiors of those convents to which she had been invited, accepting the hospitality offered her, and she would fain have taken her friend Isabel with her, but the cautious convent girl would not expose herself to the reputation or even suspicion of a vocation, with all its consequences; and our heroine therefore began her journey with Jane Saunders for her companion, having promised Mr Bernard, that she would decide nothing, without first seeing or writing to him. On the eve of

her journey, Geraldine had been put in possession of De Grey's wishes respecting the future convent in the Abbey, and had instantly dedicated to that purpose the fortune, which, by De Grey's marriage-settlement, had become hers. The communication thus made occupied her mind greatly during her journey, and, notwithstanding her yearnings after a greater seclusion from the world, she felt willing to renounce this preference, could she but know that the life of a sister of charity was that to which God called her. Her first visit was to a convent, where the canonical hours of the divine office were chanted by a full choir of religious ; and Geraldine, with sympathetic feeling, recalled the sentiments of one, at once a theologian and a poet :

" Let us contemplate in quiet meditation, the beauty and wisdom of the solemn offices which were observed in the holy precincts of the Catholic Church ;—the course, divine, universal, and, like the great operations of nature, extended over every part of the earth ; for, by means of the monasteries, the celestial sounds were as familiar to the desert as to the city. They were heard in the solemn depths of the forests, on the wildest mountain-pass, and were borne along with the shriek of the sea-birds over the ocean wave."*

Most inspiring to Geraldine's ear, and dear to her heart, were the sounds of matins, lauds, prime, the lesser hours, vespers and complin ; and most soothing to her was it to wander beneath the shade of venerable trees, and amidst the tangled copsewood of the wilderness that surrounded the convent, where no sounds broke on her solitude, save the distant clock, or bell, or the cawing of the rooks, which had established their numerous community on the tops of the high beech trees. After some weeks thus spent, Geraldine asked her heart, whether the calm which now filled it, might not at length become stagnant, and whether the reaction of a naturally vigorous and dauntless mind, might not be to struggle and burst forth to active life again. She thought that she could safely answer " No : " and after some farther information derived from the nuns, and some more weeks of doubt respecting the will of God concerning her, " Here will I rest," thought she : " why seek other convents, only to distract my mind ? " I find in this ancient order, the especial commemoration of my blessed Saviour's sufferings ; and for one who wishes to hide herself from the glare of this world's notice and

applause, can there be a fitter motto than, 'Here lies she, who, dead to all things, lives to God.'” Our heroine accordingly wrote to Mr Bernard, that she believed herself called to an entire surrender of herself, even to relinquishing the spot where lay the mortal remains of her husband and the order he had preferred; which she was the more willing to resign, as she thought she had all her life received too much of the applause of the world, and in the order likely to be established in the Abbey, she should still be exposed to it. She also the same day signified to the mother-prioress her desire to be admitted to the order, and, in a few days, presented her petition in chapter and was accepted. The day fixed for receiving her as postulant, was in the following week, and Geraldine considered that she had now chosen her temporal home, in foretaste of that which was eternal.

That night, having retired as usual to her room in the out-quarters, she was kneeling in prayer in her oratory, when suddenly a voice—whether to the external ear, or deeply sounding in her heart, she knew not—thus spoke: “Sick and in prison, and ye visited me not.” Awe, mingled with terror and anguish, filled the heart of Geraldine, as it responded, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” The voice uttered no more, but had she not been favoured by sufficient indication of the will of God? No sleep visited her that night,—the only means by which she calmed the continued agitation and actual pain of her heart, was, by the resolution to leave her present abode on the morrow, and follow the blessed invitation of her Lord Jesus Christ.

The morning at length came, and with it more deliberation: at the earliest possible hour, Geraldine sought the confessional of Father Laurence. She related what had passed; adding, “I would willingly come also for your parting blessing, Father, for, were I to yield to my feelings, I should leave this place to-day.”

After a pause, as was his wont, the gentle voice of Father Laurence put this question: “When you heard or felt those words, did they bring calm or agitation to your soul?”

“They produced the greatest possible agitation,” replied Geraldine.

“Then, I think,” said Father Laurence, “that we may strongly suspect them to come from the enemy, for the Spirit brings calm and peace.”

“But, Father,” said Geraldine, “how could the words fail to

agitate me, when they were to recall me to my real vocation, and upbraided me for deserting it? shall I remain weeping in the sepulchre, when my risen Lord bids me follow him?"

"The motives which induced you," said Father Laurence, "to seek seclusion in preference to joining an order which receives so much the applause of men, were pure, and in the spirit of Him who desired to be despised of men. I do not pronounce on this voice as coming from the enemy, but I give you this advice, do not recede from the step you have actually taken here, till some proof be given you, that Almighty God has other designs for you. Rest assured, He will make evident to you His blessed will, in a manner you cannot mistake: loss of health, incapacity for the duties, rejection by the community, something like these will occur, to make plain to you the blessed will of God."

Geraldine submitted; for, although deeply convinced that the voice was divine, yet she remembered, that the obedience of St Theresa, to her spiritual guide, under still more trying circumstances, was highly acceptable to God; and she felt assured, that if she were submissive to the spiritual authority placed over her, He would make clear to Father Laurence, whether she were destined to serve Him by a life of contemplation and austerities, or by labours of love towards the suffering members of His mystical body.

With this firm hope, and casting aside all solicitude, our heroine began the trial of her new duties. For awhile, all prospered, and she had conquered the first difficulties of her new life, when, as if to prove the more clearly to herself and her spiritual director, that she could do nothing but in the path designed for her, Geraldine lost, too rapidly to be mistaken, her health, her capacity, her energy, her zeal; in fact, all the powers of mind and body bestowed on her, to fulfil another vocation.

She had now the consent, nay, more, the recommendation, of Father Laurence to depart, and to think no more of any cloistered order. Her duty was to return to the world for a time, to re-establish her health, but he did not pronounce whether as a secular or a religious,—he believed her destined to serve and glorify God.

"I see that Almighty God has graciously signified to you the part of his vineyard in which you are to serve him," said Lady Winefride, who, on our heroine's return to her home, had

once more become her guest. "You made the renunciation of this home, of the father who had resumed his claims on you, of the cherished scenes also of your earthly love, and the tomb where it sleeps for ever: and having done this, God gives back the offering, and you are bound to retain it, and to forget that you ever wished to lead a life different from that in which you have given such edification during the life of your lamented husband. All your duties are immediately around you; and, as 'the widow indeed' of the early Church, you may fully consecrate yourself to God, and become the benefactress of the future convent near you, without deserting the parent whose declining years will require your duty and your love."

Thus spoke the pious and experienced Lady Winefride, and she spoke only as she had acted; for in early life, having lost the object of her choice, and having no call to the religious life, she had filled a post which, although not in general recommended by the Catholic clergy, was in her case not considered by her director as one of too much liberty and self-indulgence—that of a maiden lady in the world. Many had reason to bless the divine Providence which had led and fixed in this post a being so benevolent, and endowed with strength of mind to execute the plans her heart conceived.

Geraldine listened with respect to all that Lady Winefride could urge to detain her in her home, and resolved to take no step from it, that should not be obviously pointed out to her by the Almighty hand that had brought her back to its long-tried sphere of usefulness. There were times, also, in which her now delicate and suffering frame seemed to authorize the advice now given her, to think no more of the religious vows. In these hours of sickness and despondency, her faithful Isabel again watched, like a spirit of love, around her couch; and laid up, unconsciously perhaps, a store of rich blessings for herself hereafter.

Mr Bernard had welcomed our heroine back with joy unmixed with surprise, for to him, the light hovered over and revealed the scene of her future life; nor was it dimmed either by the return of General Carrington, and the affectionate re-union of father and daughter, nor by the gradual admission of friends and acquaintances, whom, for her father's sake, she again consented to receive.

Mr Bernard knew, that deep in Geraldine's heart was the

desire perfectly to fulfil the will of God, and that, when once made known to her, there would be instant and joyful compliance. He also knew, that notwithstanding the wise arguments of her Catholic friends, and his own silence, she felt that in her present mode of life, although she might fulfil the duties of charity, and hope to hear the blessed invitation promised to those who perform them for Christ's sake, yet she would be withholding that which she had once freely offered—the conformity to His chosen life on earth. She would be rich while He was poor: caressed, while He was despised: in liberty and authority, while He became obedient even to the death of the cross.

CHAPTER XIII.

Farewell !
 Ye limpid streams and floods
 Farewell !
 Brighter scenes I seek above,
 In the realms of peace and love.

Jephtha's Daughter.

THE second year of Geraldine's widowhood was now drawing to its close. The convent, to the erection of which, all the Catholics, but especially a pious lady of rank, of the neighbourhood, had contributed, was nearly completed, when the supposed visionary scheme of an order, such as she had described to Isabel, was made known to her by Mr Bernard, not only as the one chosen by the Bishop of the diocese for the sisters of the abbey, but also as that to which he believed her called by Almighty God, for his glory, her own sanctification, and the spiritual and temporal benefit of her suffering fellow-creatures. This was the order of our blessed Lady of Mercy, founded under this ancient religious title by an Irish lady, who had become at the same time the mother-superior of the first convent of the order.

Geraldine received this intelligence with joy and gratitude, and when she had listened to every detail which Mr Bernard could give her, said, smiling, "I am happy to imitate that holy man who for years had been endeavouring to form a congregation of religious men who should be missionaries, teachers, and divines,

—but when he heard that Saint Ignatius had founded the ‘Society of Jesus,’ blessed God that another had been found more worthy to accomplish that good work for the greater glory of God! And now,” added she, “let there be no more delay, but, during my father’s visit to his Yorkshire estates, let me at once take the step he is aware I contemplate, and let me save both him and myself a parting which is inevitable.”

To this Mr Bernard consented, provided our heroine would write soon enough to enable her father to see, or at least to write to, her before her departure.

From the real joy with which Geraldine had at length heard from her spiritual director the words, “Your hour is come,” she anticipated not the conflict which was still in store for her. Yet, when the letter was written to General Carrington, the closing expression of filial love and gratitude caused her so much emotion, that having sealed and despatched it, she left the house unseen by Isabel, to wander alone through the grounds. It was the season and the time of evening described in our opening chapter, and as our heroine stood on the high terrace, and looked over the river, valley, and distant hills, her heart swelled as though it must break. Her early childhood arose before her, as she turned to each familiar scene, when, loving and beloved, soft words and sweet caresses nurtured the cherished object of a mother’s love. O! pure unequalled love, if aught on earth can be thus termed, this—this alone can claim it: and yet there have been souls, who, feeling thus in tenderest gratitude, have yet been called to break this fondest tie, by that mysterious voice, unheard by all save her who fain would hear it not, yet cannot resist to follow it. This agony was spared to Geraldine; her mother slept in Christ ere her young heart had known a love beyond, or she had learned to say, “Eternal rest give unto her, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her.” In this hour it was, her father caused the struggle she had believed was passed, and as she continued gazing on the inheritance which lay in rich yet placid beauty before her, the desertion of his only child seemed doubly cruel, and an inward conflict arose, so far more violent than any she had yet experienced, that in agony she groaned aloud, and partly roused by the sounds, fled from the terrace, and unconsciously took one of the walks which led to the avenue of entrance from the park. In this avenue appeared, advancing from the house, the boy and pony whose office was to convey the letters to and from the post; and directly her eye caught the leather bag,

she resolved to secure the letter which had thus by seeming accident been returned to her. The boy alighted, and unstrapped the bag ; but Geraldine had forgotten that the key was in the charge of the steward, and its duplicate at the post office. The pony, however, required no spur to urge his return, and our heroine remained with the bag lying at her feet. A considerable time elapsed before she again saw the young messenger, for the steward had gone forth for his evening walk. He, however, had been found, the key was produced, and our heroine, unlocking the bag, regained the letter. She looked long and earnestly at the seal, then at the address,—again placed her finger on the seal, when at length, hastily replacing the letter in the bag, which she locked, she bid the boy make what speed he could, and turned from the avenue into another part of the pleasure-grounds. “ Oh God, I thank thee,” cried she, “ that thou wert present with me during this temptation, when having ‘ put my hand to the plough,’ I was looking back—was leaving thee sorrowfully, because I had ‘ large possessions ;’ was returning to ‘ bury my father,’ remembering not that every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for thy name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting.” Geraldine resolved, as she slowly pursued her walk, to banish from her mind all solicitude respecting the inheritance she was about to renounce, casting all her care on God, who would provide : and she also resolved to hasten the time for her departure to the convent in ———, where she and two of her friends and sister penitents of Father Bernard were to make their noviciate. She had regained the terrace at a part whence the view was almost panoramic, but which was now veiled in the deepened shadows of evening. “ Rest ever thus in shade,” cried she, “ to my weaned eyes, ye scenes of earth,—farewell ! farewell !” And now, turning to the side where the Abbey hill intercepted the boundless view, she bent her steps slowly towards the house, when she perceived along the pathway which led from the Abbey, a figure advancing towards the terrace. Why did our heroine, in that hour of deepening gloom, remain to watch that form ? Why did her heart throb, with mingled terror and joy ? Her feet were rooted to the earth, as in a dream ; her brain reeled. “ What ! had he indeed returned from the land of spirits, and for what purpose ? was it to direct her future path ?” The figure ascended the turf steps of the terrace, and Geraldine had just, by an expiring effort

of strength, made the sign of the cross, when she was addressed by the stranger, in tones which spoke to her of years gone by, but which remained but vaguely in her memory. She scarcely knew what was said to her, but her previous emotion being calmed, by the presence of a person indifferent to her, she regained all the calm dignity of her manner, and requested to know the motive for the present visit of a stranger.

"Lady de Grey," spoke this once familiar voice, "I perceive that I am forgotten, but my memory has been more retentive, and enables me to recognise, after a lapse of years, the 'Geraldine of my early dreams.'"

The peculiar pronunciation of her name, left Geraldine no longer in doubt. "Don Carlos Duago," replied she, "I do remember you, and much regret, that my father, General Carrington, is from home, for he would have welcomed you with his wonted hospitality."

"I am aware of his absence," said Don Carlos, "in fact, I have seen him, and have his sanction for paying my respects to you."

"I regret," said Geraldine, "that I cannot supply his place in bidding you welcome to the Hall. I am on the eve of an important journey, and full of thoughts respecting it."

"You are proud, Lady de Grey," said Don Carlos, "so am I; nevertheless, having your father's wishes on my side, I may, without intrusion, enter this once hospitable door, and for half an hour, madam, for I ask no more, speak to you on a subject which will interest you far more than you are at present disposed to believe possible."

"To-morrow," replied Geraldine, "I will take care to be at leisure at what ever hour you may appoint, but to-night I can receive no visitor."

"It is later than I intended," said Don Carlos, "but I was detained on my journey, and again wasted time in being my own guide from the town; I had not calculated on the alterations that would occur in these well-remembered grounds during thirteen years of absence. To-morrow, then—but name your hour, madam."

Geraldine did so, and Don Carlos, leaving the terrace, took the direction of the avenue which led towards Elverton, while our heroine, on re-entering the house, escaped to her room, and to her bed, but not to sleep.

The morrow came, and at the appointed hour Geraldine re

ceived Don Carlos in the library, where, according to her express wish, Isabel remained at work. In his hand he led a beautiful boy of about five years old, whom, from the striking likeness to himself, Geraldine concluded to be his son, and of whom therefore she took no notice.

"Whatever personal interest, madam," said Don Carlos, "I may have in thus soliciting an interview, it is held in subjection to a sterner duty, and it is with reference to this duty that I now request to hear from your own lips the truth of the report, that you have renounced the intention of leaving the world to enter religion?"

"I have not renounced that intention," said Geraldine, "although ill health has compelled its delay."

"And you can willingly leave this home," said Don Carlos, "these estates, this tenantry? You can forget that you were once heiress of Elverton Manor?"

"This dwelling on the worldly prosperity which surrounds me," said our heroine, "does, I confess, surprise me, in one who was wont to glory in hereditary kindred with the Teresas, the Elizabeths, and other saints of Spain and Portugal; those saints who trampled on all the world holds glorious, to attain a heavenly crown!"

"You have remembered, then," said Don Carlos, "my youthful piety. All is not quite forgotten of those confiding days?"

"I purpose," continued Geraldine, "by the blessing of God, to leave this place to-morrow, never to re-enter it, until, in the religious garb, and as the consecrated spouse of Christ, I kneel by my father's dying bed."

"These holy and elevated feelings," said Don Carlos, "remove many painful difficulties in my path, while they place others in my way."

"I do not understand you, Don Carlos," said Geraldine, rising. "I have replied with candour to your many unexpected inquiries, and must now hope that you are satisfied."

"Stop, madam!" said Don Carlos, as our heroine was moving to the door; "It is no sickly love-tale I have to tell, but a manly struggle with adversity, and with wrongs that heaven alone can teach me to forgive. The time has come when justice shall be done to me and mine, but I cannot forget the feeling due to her who must be the sufferer."

but as candid as I have been," said Geraldine much

surprised. "What can affect her who has given herself to God?"

"During your residence in Rome," said Don Carlos, "you visited the monastery of ——?"

"I did so," said Geraldine.

"And you there saw one who was sheltered in that holy retreat for a while—a Spanish lady?" said he.

"I can never forget the interesting being I there met," replied Geraldine.

"Had you ever seen her before?" inquired Don Carlos.

"Never!" replied she, more and more astonished at these questions.

"Did you never think you were watched at the palazzo?"

"I did think I was an object of great interest to a lady there," replied Geraldine, of whom I could never obtain more than a passing glimpse. When I met the beautiful Beatrice de Mendoza at the monastery, it struck me that the face was the same, but I discarded the idea as too visionary."

"It was, however, true," said Don Carlos, "and at the time, madam, you saw Beatrice de Mendoza, she was the wife of General Carrington. Yes, the wife of your father, though not at that time mother of the boy who claims from you a sister's love."

A sudden light broke on Geraldine. She turned to the noble child, who stood near her, and then looked inquiringly at Don Carlos.

"Ferdinand," said he, "kneel down and ask that lady's blessing;" but before the boy could obey, Geraldine had caught him in her arms and blessed him.

Tears glistened in the dark eyes of the Spaniard. "You do not ask me, madam," said he, "what is the tie between that child and me?"

"His mother is, I conclude, your sister," said Geraldine.

"She is so," returned Don Carlos; "and, as is customary in Spain, has ever borne our mother's name, in preference to that of 'Duago.'"

"And why—why has there been this secrecy," cried our heroine, "why have we not known and loved each other, and why has my father deputed another to bring my brother to my arms?"

Fire flashed from the eyes of Don Carlos. "Why! well may

you inquire 'why' the high-born and virtuous Donna Beatrice Mendoza has been for nine years an unacknowledged wife, while the brother, who would ill have brooked such concealment, was suffered to languish imprisoned by his own treacherous countrymen, and when set free, soothed and silenced by the mention of his English love, and led to hope that she might yet be won—"

"Stop!" cried our heroine, remembering that the young Ferdinand was intelligent enough to understand all that was said. "I will hear no more, till it is my father's own wish to relate to me his further history. It suffices to me at present to have found this little treasure," and she again pressed the boy to her bosom.

"You are to give me all this fine house and park, and a pony, and a pencil, and a great deal of money, and a knife that will cut, and a watch that will tick," said Ferdinand, in admirable English. "Will you give me all this?"

"I will give you the pony, and the pencil, and the knife, and the watch directly," said Geraldine, "but the fine house and the park are not mine to give, they belong to your father and mine. He will soon bring you here to live, and you can then ride your pony about the park."

"Shall you ride about with me?"

"No," said Geraldine, "I am going away to-morrow."

"Shall you come back again?"

"No, my little brother," said she: "I am going to be a nun; do you know what that means?"

"Yes," said he, "a nun is a woman in black, who loves God."

"And do you love him, Ferdinand?"

"Sometimes," said he.

"Why do you not love him always?"

"Because it makes me tired," said he. "I thought you were going to give me a watch, and all the other things?"

"So I am," said Geraldine, and she became during the next half hour completely occupied in supplying the various demands of this little idol, and succeeded in making him quite happy.

"But I expected to see a prettier sister," said he; "my uncle said I should find a beautiful sister—and now you do look prettier, that your cheeks are red, and that you laugh."

"Ferdinand," said she, "when you say your prayers, will you say, 'O God, bless my sister Geraldine?'"

"I will," said he.

"And when I am a nun, will you be a good and dutiful boy

to your father, and love him, and pray for him, and try to make him as happy as I am making you now?"

"I will," said Ferdinand.

"And will you be kind to the poor people who live near this park, and give them money, and food, and clothes, and all that they want?"

"I cannot give them my knife," said he, "nor anything that I want myself, but they can have what I do not want."

"If you give to the poor only what you do not want, God will not love you," said Geraldine: but Ferdinand spread his dimpled hands on all his treasures. Our heroine continued, however, to plead so movingly in behalf of the suffering poor, and enforced so effectually the principle on which this charity was to be exercised, that, to her infinite joy and thanksgiving, the treasures were relinquished one by one, till at length, with a burst of grief, the pony was also resigned, and he exclaimed, "You know I can walk to God!"

The post-chaise that was to bear the little Ferdinand back to his present home now drove to the door, before either of the party were aware of the hour. Amongst the treasures which he had selected, was a book which had belonged to De Grey, but which, not having been packed up with those presented either to the priest's house or convent, was lying on the table. Its white vellum binding caught his eye, and with pertinacious adherence to his own choice, he liked no other book recommended to him, half so well. Geraldine, breathing a fervent prayer that the noble and chivalrous qualities of the author and of the late possessor, might adorn the breast of her brother, gladly bestowed on him the "Broad Stone of Honour," and having kept nothing from the child for the poor, but a purse of coins she had previously given him, held him locked in her arms for some time, before she felt able to resign in her turn this newly found treasure, and suffer him to be lifted to the chaise, in which sat Iago, the General's confidential servant.

Don Carlos returned to the room where Geraldine was standing by the window, and closing the door, urged, in respectful but energetic terms, his hope, that she might consent to remain in the domestic circle about to surround her. He spoke of the strength and tenderness of her father's regard for her, of the exalted sentiments entertained by his sister of the being she had so long and ardently desired to know, of the new tie of a brother

whom she loved without a feeling of jealousy, and lastly of himself, his career of sorrow and adversity, and the hope he entertained, that he might, in time, revive in her heart the interest which he proudly felt he had been the first to inspire.

To the first part of Don Carlos' arguments, Geraldine replied by earnest assurances of the joy and thankfulness she felt towards Heaven, that the decline of her father's days would be cheered by domestic affection, and begged that he would convey these sentiments to his sister, "with this pledge of their sincerity," added she, placing a sealed packet in his hand, for Donna Beatrice, which was a miniature of herself. "For me," added she, "these earthly ties and affections are passed, never to be recalled: the remembrance even of them is lost in the glorious future, and were I to prolong this interview, Don Carlos, it would only give you pain." Some time, however, passed, before Don Carlos could be convinced that she had irrevocably chosen to live for God alone, for he had gained courage from her omitting to plead, against him, the memory of De Grey; but this omission had been caused solely by the higher impediment of her heavenly espousals; which superseded all other considerations; but for that all engrossing feeling, she might in truth have said—

"Gin living worth could win my heart,
You should na plead in vain,
But in the darksome grave 'tis laid,
Never to rise again."

At length Don Carlos joined his impatient charge; and Geraldine resting her head on the seat of the window near her, remained immoveable and in silence, during hours of thought connected with the extraordinary disclosures just made to her.

The journey took place on the following day to the Convent of N——, where the meeting is described, in the first chapter of this volume, between our heroine and Angela de Grey, called in religion Sister Mary Joseph. The events we have recorded, and much of the mental history, having been related, and some hours of pure enjoyment spent in each other's society, the appointed hour at length arrived for Geraldine to rejoin her companions, and to pursue her journey.

"Farewell, dear Angela," said she, "farewell in this world. We are not as those who sorrow without hope; for if I be faithful to the grace vouchsafed me, we shall meet as sister spouses the heavenly King, to follow Him whithersoever He goeth."

"May Almighty God for ever bless you, my dear and exalted friend," said Angela. "I did not expect to feel either this meeting, or this parting, so much as I have done; I will not regret however this discovery of my weakness, but rejoice in the humiliation."

"Shall we indeed not see you ever again, Lady de Grey?" said one of the nuns, who accompanied our heroine to the carriage. "You are not to keep enclosure, therefore perhaps you will some day visit us again?"

"The Sisters of Mercy," said Geraldine, "quit their loved enclosure, at the call of mercy and charity alone. They make no journeys of recreation. Once returned to the scene of my duties at Elverton, I leave it not; so let us part willingly in the body, to meet constantly in spirit at the throne of grace. Let me entreat you to remember me, in frequent prayer!"

One more embrace from Angela, and the friends mutually surrendered the creature for the service of the Creator.

On arriving at her father's house in Berkeley-square, Geraldine found a note from Mr Bernard, followed soon after by a visit from himself, stating that the two ladies who were to accompany her to ———, had begged for some days' delay, before they should join her in London, and that he had promised for her, that she would consent to wait for them, and pass the leisure evenings, which this delay would give her, with his friend and benefactress, the Baroness de M——.

Geraldine had much to communicate to her reverend friend, respecting the disclosure of Don Carlos; but she suspected, as she told her tale, that Mr Bernard had partly, if not fully, known the ties which General Carrington had formed; and he now congratulated her on the comfort it must afford her, to feel released from all responsibility respecting his future happiness. "See," continued Mr Bernard, "the tender care of Almighty God over you, and his indulgence for your weakness. He has permitted you, by the assistance of his grace, to make him the free offering of all that you believed you held in prospect, as well as in possession, and allows you to feel all the joy, which that generous surrender brings the heart. In the sight of men, perhaps, you will retire from the world because you have ceased to be a great heiress, but in the sight of God, you leave it in the purity of a devoted heart."

Geraldine would willingly have excused herself from the intro-

duction she had once so much wished, to the celebrated lady with whom Mr Bernard was now a guest, but at length consented to pass part of the following day with her ; a consent which produced from the Baroness that evening a note, or rather letter of thanks, written with all the warmth and spirit which characterized her, and at two o'clock on the following day, Mr Bernard called by appointment, and accompanied our heroine to the dwelling of that lady.

CHAPTER XIV.

The good begun by thee, shall onward flow,
In many a branching stream, and wider grow ;
The seed, that, in these few and fleeting hours,
Thy hands unsparing and unwearied sow,
Shall deck thy grave with amaranthine flowers,
And yield thee fruits divine in heaven's immortal bowers.

Wilcox.

THE house of the Baroness de M—— was shabby, close, and dark ; and dullness seemed to pervade all that was visible. A gentleman, whom Mr Bernard greeted as a brother priest, was sole occupant of the drawing-rooms, excepting a little dog, who resented their entrance by every possible demonstration, and a large handsome cat, who with quiet dignity withdrew. Geraldine sat on the soiled and ragged sofa, in spite of the dog, which the Rev. Mr Corbey endeavoured to pacify, while Mr Bernard hearing his name vociferated in shrill tones from an upper room, obeyed the summons, and after some minutes the sounds approached sufficiently near to distinguish their import.

“ Where is she,—the charming creature,—where is the celebrated Lady de Grey ? I must see her directly, Sir ! Do you hear, Sir ! Directly I say ! ” and the door flying open, from a vigorous push from without, a tall and erect old lady stood in the entrance, for a few instants in silence, taking a scrutinizing survey of our heroine's face and form, who on her part was moved to something of curiosity and interest, as she at length beheld the far-famed Baroness de M——. She was dressed in a long and tightly fitting black satin dress, over which hung a little cloak of

the same hue and material, surmounted by a full deep ruff, of white lace ; her cap corresponded with the ruff, and over it was thrown a narrow black scarf. An artificial cluster of fair ringlets nearly concealed her small and half closed eyes, while her gracious and pleasing mouth smiled in evident content.

"So you are Lady de Grey ! I am delighted with you ! I have heard all your history,—people are crazy about you ; raving mad ; but that would not make me like you. I expected to see a fine, loud, talkative, pedantic woman, and you seem as soft as a dove. I shall doat on you !"

"I scarcely feel I am welcomed by a stranger," said Geraldine advancing, "for with the countless multitude, I have learned to know the beneficent Baroness de M——."

"Ma'am, I have done a great deal of good. I have deprived myself of comforts to relieve the distressed. I have given to the just and the unjust, but I shall not get to heaven the more for all this, because I am so pleased with myself ; my left hand is sure to know everything that my right hand does. But why think of myself when you are before me, and my old friend Mr Bernard is come to me at last, and here is good Mr Corbey,—charming ! delightful ! Mr Corbey, you must stay and dine with me. We shall then be a '*partie quarrée*,' which is perfection."

"I cannot accept your hospitality to-day, Baroness, but perhaps you will allow me to call at some future period."

"Sir, I never like priests to call merely, they are to make use of my house as they would of an inn. They must dine, Sir, and you must dine here to-morrow. I like your face, Sir. It is not handsome, but it is wise and benevolent, and I hear enough of you, Sir, from our good bishop, to make me highly esteem you. And now, my dear Lady de Grey, tell me how long you can stay ? I like to know my fate at once."

"I can remain until the evening," replied Geraldine.

"Ah, my dear, I expected you would stay with me until you left town, but you do not take to me as I do to you, or you would not be so base as to rob me of what is mine by promise, your delightful society. And so, my dear ma'am, your father is a Catholic, but a poor one, however, I fear. He is governed by human respect. I knew him before you were born. He admired me vastly. A fine martial figure, looking as if he would bear down all before him ; and yet he is afraid, I understand, of supporting the truths he believes."

"I wish you good day, Baroness," said Mr Corbey, wishing to interrupt this thinking aloud, which he feared would wound Lady de Grey.

"Good bye, Sir," said the Baroness, "but look in upon us this evening, if you can; 'au revoir à ce soir.' There, Sir! I give you the refrain of a beautiful little French song. Do you sing, my dear ma'am? but why do I ask? I see, by your whole air, that you possess every accomplishment and every grace, without being handsome. Now, that was just my own case. I was never beautiful, ma'am, but I had all the effect of a beauty, because I had grace and spirit. Come, Sir," to Mr Bernard, who had retired to a corner, with his breviary, "mind your office, and don't be listening to my charms, for,

'Green leaves all turn yellow, yellow, yellow.'

"Pray, Lady de Grey, do you know why I wear this little cloak? I will tell you, as I told the bishop, when he asked me the reason: 'my lord,' said I, 'because I have this day as fine a figure as I ever had in my life, so I hide it in pity to strangers; for, what would be their consternation, if, after following this perfect figure, I were to turn round upon them with my death's-head?' Ma'am, they say I am a hundred, but that's a lie, I am only ninety. Come, Sir, have you not finished your task, yet? Our priests, ma'am, for fear they should not have enough to do, are obliged to spoil their eyes by reading the little print of their breviary so many hours a-day. I threaten to throw the books behind the fire, for whenever I invite a good priest to spend the day with me, the first thing he tells me is, that he has not had time to say his office, and during all my pretty prattle, there he sits, trying not to listen. Ah! Sir, so you are smiling at last. Come, get it over at once, and then we will have dinner. Pray, Lady de Grey, did you ever hear of my dinners? perhaps not,—well, you shall have a specimen to-day. My dinners, ma'am, just reverse the sentence passed on the city dinners; for with me, there are more good things said than eaten. Ah! my dear, you can understand a jest, you suit me exactly. What a pity we cannot live together, and converse on things grave or gay, as suited the mood of the hour. How much better to stay with me, who love you, than to follow this will-o'-the-wisp, called a vocation. We should be just as independent during the mornings as if we were strangers, and meet in the evenings to cheer each other, as two widows should, until you should marry again;

for I am not selfish, and would not keep you a widow for my sake. I have had persons to live with me, ma'am, but no one like you, and I love you with all my heart. You remind me of a dear friend I had when I was a girl. You will say I have a fine memory to remember so long ago. Yes, ma'am, I have a very fine memory. This lady and I were in a convent together in Paris for our education. She lost every thing afterwards in the French Revolution. Ah, ma'am! that revolution! well! if it did many shocking things, it did a good thing for me, for it led the way to my marriage with my dear baron. Ah, ma'am! people may talk as they please of their first love, but all that I had ever felt or fancied, was realized in this second marriage. The baron was in every relation of life, a perfect Christian, as well as an accomplished nobleman. My affection was mingled with respect and even veneration, and 'tis since his death I have been a widow indeed! Bless me, Sir," to Mr Bernard, "so you know exactly when to finish your office, for it is just striking three o'clock. I rather suspect, Sir, you say part of it twice over, on purpose not to talk to me. Now, pull the bell, but don't break the wire. Bless me! I shall not pay for all the damage you do here, Sir. Charles! Charles, come in Charles, we want our dinner, Charles; for we have all been talking till we are dead. Ma'am, I am very kind to my four servants. I give them plenty of every thing, and spare nothing to make them happy. I keep no accounts; and I spend about fifty pounds a-year more than if I were one of your locking-up ladies. Ma'am, I never could lock up either my thoughts or my money. My servants are all Protestants, and I leave them to talk with the good priests or not, just as they like. I never say a word to them myself. I hate your cupboard conversions. Charles, don't put the table so near me. Draw it away, Sir, I am going to the piano, to sing to Lady de Grey." The old lady flourished across the room, and sitting down to the instrument, struck a few emphatic chords, and began in a clear and true, though cracked voice, "I won't be a nun, I can't be a nun, &c." Mr Bernard drew his chair near Geraldine, and said in a low voice, "All this is too much for your present spirits, I fear."

The tears which had gathered in her eyes now overflowed, but she hastily dried them, and said, smiling, "I assure you that I am amused, and were it not so, I could endure anything, when it is to be for the last time."

"I expect we shall see our Elverton friends to-morrow," said he; and at this moment, the dinner being brought in, the baroness started up, and clapping her hands, cried, "Come, Sir, my grace. Charles, take away the dog and cat, and don't come up again till I ring. Now, this is charming! 'The feast of reason and the flow of soul,' with something for the animal man at the same time."

The dinner was scarcely over, when Charles announced that a person below wished very particularly to see the Baroness de M——.

"A person!" cried she; "pray be more exact in your terms. Is it a man or a woman?"

"A man, my lady."

"Pray, Lady de Grey, do you ever read the newspaper?"

"Never," replied Geraldine.

"Well, ma'am, I read the other day of a trial in which it was necessary to ascertain the precise meaning of the term 'respectable,' and it was established in court that respectable means, 'to keep a gig'! Pray, Charles, did the man below come in a gig?"

"No, my lady; but I think he looks as if he might."

"Ha! ha! charming. Let him come up; but first draw away our dinner-table;—and stop, Charles; this 'very particularly wishing to see me, I do not like; for this almost invariably means very particularly wishing for my money. Show him up, however, and stay in the room till I give you a sign that all is safe. Sir," to the mild, and apparently distressed, young stranger, who entered, "if you are come for my money, it is too late; for I have given it all away, and am as poor as yourself, and very nearly as shabby. Pray, Sir, who are you?"

The stranger advanced, and held out a printed paper; but the baroness shrieked, "Don't show me papers and petitions. Bless me, Sir, I never admit such people; I even forbid my servants to take in these papers at my door. Come, Sir, cannot you speak? Who are you?"

"I am a monk of the order of La Trappe," replied he.

"A monk! a monk! No, Sir; I have nothing to do with monks or—monkeys!"

The young man smiled. "Oh, Sir, you like a joke, do you? Come, I like you for that; but I have nothing left for lazy, begging monks. I have enough to do to take care of our poor

parish priests, who are killing themselves with work. Here is my friend Mr Bernard paying me a visit, because his bishop peremptorily ordered him to be idle for a month, and for that purpose to leave his own mission ; but what rendered this necessary ? Sir, I will tell you. He had been slaving night and day, without any relaxation, amongst his poor people, who have increased to thousands, and who can neither live nor die without him. Up all night frequently, to attend some poor creature, miles away in some wretched hovel, through wet and cold, to give him the last rites of our holy church. Sir, I can compare our priests to nothing more closely than to an overloaded horse, sinking under his efforts ; but these, Sir, are the men for my money—not your lazy monks !”

“ Ah, Baroness,” said Mr Bernard, “you only require to know more on the subject, and you will own that there is no such thing as a lazy monk. The useful and laborious order of La Trappe”—

“ Useful ?” cried the Baroness ; “ useful, Sir, and laborious ! Bless me, Sir ! a Trappist monk useful ?”

“ Yes, Baroness, I repeat it ; the useful and laborious order of La Trappe requires only to be better known, and you will be the first to render the tribute of a generous mind to those you have misjudged. The monks of Melleraye, before they were driven from their peaceful retirement, were the indefatigable workmen of a large factory, under the control of Mr Saulmier ; and since their establishment in Ireland, they have not been idle, as your present visitor will doubtless prove to you, if you will invite his history.”

“ Come, then, Sir,” said the baroness to the young monk, “ begin your history, and relate to me everything from the time of your leaving Melleraye ; but first tell me your name ?”

“ My name in the world ?”

“ Bless me, Sir ! your name in the world was common enough, depend upon it. It is your name in your monastery I wish to know.”

“ In religion I am Brother Julian.”

“ Well, Brother Julian, begin directly.”

The young Trappist obeyed, by drawing a letter from his pocket, which his abbot of Mount Melleraye in Ireland had written to a reverend friend in London, who had permitted him to make use of it for the information of the benevolent.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ In reply to your communication of the 9th instant, I beg to offer for your information the following abstract of our labours, since the commencement of our establishment on this mountain. Having been deprived of our monastery and property in France, we arrived in Ireland in a state of the most appalling indigence. Our number was then, as it is at present, about eighty in community. We had no friends, no means of any sort. After many laborious journeys, in order to find a place on which I might form a foundation, and establish my brethren, I found none better suited than this tract of barren mountain ; and you will be able to form a correct idea of our labours, when I say, that here lay a tract of country, containing more than 5000 statute acres, uncultivated, neglected, despised. Here was neither hedge, fence, tree, nor even shrub of any sort ; nothing appeared but towering mountains, which seemed to look down in savage wildness on the gloomy plains, extending far away, and concealing their stone-set surfaces under the wild heath, or dusky turf. Of this tract Sir R—— H—— kindly allowed me to select a part, which having done, I stood alone in the centre ; and looking around in awful gaze, could discover nothing but desolation. Here was nothing to encourage,—no hedges, no trees, not even a house, wherein, with my distressed brethren, I might find refuge against the fury of the elements, which here exercised, in every terrific form, the most destructive sway. A little cottage, that had been occupied by the keeper of this part of the C—— estate, and which stood at the extremity of our newly acquired, but wretchedly destitute, inheritance, was exclusively our place of retreat. That cottage is rather too confined to accommodate four persons, and yet more than twenty of my brethren, with myself, contrived to live in it during an entire year, subsisting on a few potatoes, which were given us by our charitable neighbours, and having water only for beverage, or, at best, a little milk. In that condition, unprovided with instruments of agriculture, or money to purchase them, having scarcely ordinary clothing, how were we to flatter ourselves with the hope of ever being able to succeed in raising a monastery, or cultivating land that required not only instruments, horses, strenuous and persevering efforts, but likewise abundant funds ? We, however, contrived to procure a few deal boards, with which we constructed a sort of oratory, and temporary altar,

where we attended to our religious exercises. We arose at a little after midnight, chanted the divine office, having much difficulty to defend our books and persons from the torrents of rain by which we were inundated, and which found free access through the numerous openings of our frail chapel. Here we committed ourselves to the care of divine Providence, and soon discovered the truth of the prophetic oracles, 'No one ever hoped in the Lord, and was confounded.' The friends of humanity,—and with feelings of tender gratitude I willingly record it,—the people of England, extended the hand of succour to raise our oppressed condition. Their benevolence and liberality enabled us to procure instruments, and with the aid first of one, and then of two horses, we commenced operations on the soil, that had never before been touched by the hand of industry. I do not attempt to describe what a scene of labours, pains, distress, now opened before us. We found the land covered in general with turf, varying in depth from three inches to three feet, and nourishing vast quantities of strong heath. A little below the surface, appeared immense numbers of stones, great and small, but all firmly imbedded in the earth. To dislodge those long occupiers of the soil was indispensable to our proceeding with the work of reclaiming any part of it. The stones thus removed we collected; and having obtained means to purchase lime, and hire masons, we constructed a house, built a lime-kiln, and continued with more courage our labours of breaking up, draining, and cultivating, until by perseverance we had sowed a few acres of potatoes. Then we proceeded to make and burn bricks, which served to advance our building. We laid out a kitchen-garden, we likewise planted upwards of 150,000 timber trees; and when the first house was completed, we laid the foundation of the abbey. All the stones necessary for its construction we extracted from the land as we proceeded in preparing it for cultivation. Being at great loss for manure, and having nothing but lime, which is the first thing requisite, I procured sand from Y—, which I had conveyed to C— in large boats, and thence carted upon our newly cultivated parts. In this manner we proceeded during three years. The example thus given has been productive of the most beneficial results; many persons being moved by it, came and took into their hands other portions of the barren country; those were followed by others more numerous; houses arose on every side; industry was seen,

actively exerting its beneficent and cheering influence over the entire range ; until at length, even now, its happy results have extended to nearly the summits of our adjacent mountains. The desert has cast off its gloomy weeds, and smiles in the full attire of floral beauty.

“ This, my dear friend, is a mere abstract of what has been accomplished here during the last six years, by the aid of voluntary contributions, on the part of a distressed people, and by the steady perseverance of a few poor religious men. In a moral point of view, the enterprise is equally consoling, the people are taught their Christian duties, children instructed, and universal peace everywhere diffused.”

The young Trappist cast a look of gratitude and intelligence to Mr Bernard, as he finished his abridged history, to which Geraldine had listened with lively interest ; and the Baroness exclaimed, “ Upon my word, Mr La Trappe, you and your abbot are at once poets and orators ; and when you do speak, it certainly is to the purpose. So your community contrive to do a great deal of silent good ? That would not suit me,—I do nothing in silence, and I fear you would not admit me to your order.”

“ Our female Trappists,” said the monk smiling, “ are allowed some mitigation of the rule, but we understand that this is not acceptable to them. Indeed when it is considered that we chant the whole of the divine office in choir, and that the rest of our time is employed in severe manual labour, we have little breath left for the mere amusement of talking.”

“ Sir, I like what voice you have, better than I did when you first came in. It then sounded very whining and hypocritical. Pray, Sir, are you hungry ?”

“ I am, madam !”

“ Well, Sir, I like that answer. You shall not be hungry long ; here, Charles, bring tea, and a mutton chop for Monsieur La Trappe.”

“ No, madam, I thank you, I cannot eat flesh meat.”

“ You cannot, Sir, on a Thursday, not a vigil ! don’t be so scrupulous.”

“ I cannot, madam. A Trappist keeps perpetual abstinence.”

“ Bless me, Sir, you are mighty decided. Charles bring plenty of bread and butter an inch thick, for Monsieur La Trappe.”

While the tea was in progress, Charles gave notice that a certain tradesman had brought a bale of goods for the inspection of the Baroness.

"Send him up directly," cried she, "he is the very person I want. Come in, Sir, and spread all your goods upon the carpet. Are they the worst things you have in the shop?"

"Pretty nearly, my lady."

"Sir, 'pretty nearly' will not do for me. I send to you to bring me all the rubbish you had. What is that, Sir?"

"It is a damaged piece of merino, my lady, once intended for drawing-room curtains, but now, with a little management"—

"Charming! Sir, I perceive you are a man of sense. Mr Bernard! why positively, Sir, you are getting into the 'prayer of quiet!' Bring down your thoughts, Sir, to sublunary things, and tell me whether this stuff will not cut up delightfully into vestments?"

"Why, Baroness, considering the purpose for which you intend it, the holes and spots appear numerous."

"Not at all, Sir! They can all be hidden under the trimming; but you are become vastly fine, and must have everything of the most expensive sort. Bless me, Sir, I've no money left for your grand brocades and tissues. Charles, send Mrs Kay here. Kay! come in, Kay. Kay, did you ever see a Trappist monk? Now is your time, for there sits one. But I did not send for you to look at him, but at this beautiful piece of red stuff. Now cannot you manage the damaged part under the lace, or rather the braiding, for I cannot afford lace? Come, Mrs Kay, you are mighty silent. Are you thinking of La Trappe?"

"No, my lady, I am thinking of this red merino."

"Then, ma'am, give us a manifestation of your thoughts."

"Why, my lady, you tell me to manage the damaged parts, and it is all damaged!"

"And so were the martyrs all damaged, and full of holes and spots, before they gained their crown, and this red colour is for their feasts. Ha, ha,—charming! a capital idea, and worthy of De M—. I will buy the whole piece, Sir; so remember the discount for prompt payment."

"Now, Brother Julian," turning to the monk, as the tradesman left the room, "having despatched this business, I am ready, and more than ready to hear much about you. I should like vastly to know what you do with yourself every day and

all day long, in your convent, when your begging trips are over?"

"Ours is not a mendicant order," replied brother Julian, "and I trust that by the blessing of God on our labours, our monastery will not in future require the alms of the faithful. Would you wish to have, madam, an exact account of our monastic observances?"

"I should, Sir."

"We rise at midnight," said he, "and continue in meditation till one o'clock, when we begin the matin service, which, as we sing all the nocturns with lauds, continues till break of day. At five o'clock prime is sung. At six the bell rings us out to work in the fields, or at home, as it may have been arranged in chapter the preceding evening. Tierce is at ten o'clock, immediately before high mass, which is sung every day."

"Bless me, Sir," interrupted the Baroness, "you shall have a set of vestments for the feasts of the martyrs, off my beautiful piece of red stuff. I am sure your abbot will be charmed."

The gravity of the young monk was nearly overcome, but he passed his hand across his face and resumed—"Sext follows immediately after high mass. We then meditate till the angelus at twelve, after which the bell rings for dinner."

"Pray, Sir, is that your first meal?"

"It is, madam, and in Lent is deferred till four o'clock."

"Fasting, with singing and hard labour!" cried she. "It is enough to kill you, Sir. No wonder that you keep silence when you can. All this is very foolish. Go on, Sir."

"During the summer months we are allowed an hour's rest after dinner."

"Why that is very luxurious, Sir—a siesta for a monk!"

"We have but four hours sleep at night," said brother Julian, "and this one hour just supports nature; our beds are of boards, raised from the floor. At the end of the hour we go out again to work. At three we sing none, then labour again till near vespers, which are at six, and after this we have our supper. The chapter is held after supper. Complin is at half-past seven, and at eight o'clock we go to rest. From this last service till after prime the next morning, is our time of strict silence. We take no notice of each other, not even of father abbot, if we meet him, and we must make no sign, which we are allowed to when at work."

"Sir, I remember to have heard that you talk with your fingers, which is breaking the spirit of your rule. Come, Sir, defend yourself."

"The signs we are permitted to make when at work," replied the monk, "are limited to what is necessary to carry on our labour. Any indulgence beyond this, would be, indeed, contrary to the spirit of our holy rule, which prescribes that our life should be passed in continual and uninterrupted union with God by prayer and praise."

"Upon my word, Sir, I really like you very well, and your account has been very interesting. Tell me what you are allowed to eat by your rule?"

"All abstinence food we may take excepting fish," said brother Julian. "Our dinner in Ireland generally consists of a good-sized bowl of meagre soup, as many potatoes as we wish, with milk, and our own coarse bread; we drink only water; and that we may not take this fare with too much avidity, our abbot rings a little bell three times during dinner, when not a hand must move, or even a morsel be swallowed, till the sign be given to proceed. Our supper is generally bread, with cheese or salad."

"Sir!" cried the baroness, "the vestments will be made up by next week, and when you call for them you shall dine with me: I will give you your choice of every thing you have mentioned, and I will take care to have a little bell to ring at you whenever you get red in the face."

Brother Julian arose, and the cheerful humility with which he had received all her jokes, warmed the heart of the old lady, who called after him, "Stop, Sir, I really like you very much, and shall esteem your order henceforward. When you come next week, I shall have received a yearly present of two cheeses, and you shall have half of one of them to take back with you to your monastery, together with the vestments. Now you may go—*pax tecum!*"

"If I can spare any money next year, and am alive to give it," said the Baroness, after the monk had departed, "I will inquire how these silent agriculturists are going on, but now I have not a shilling that is not bespoken. This is true poverty, my dear Lady de Grey, and the poverty of a willing heart; but as for the vow you are going to take, it is all wrong, depend upon it. Did not Almighty God give you your fortune, and have you not been employing it hitherto in his service most use-

fully and happily, and now you are about to give it all into the hands of others, and so resign your trust. Mighty foolish, ma'am. I have no patience with those who are advising you so badly. Do you hear that, Mr Bernard?"

"I do, Baroness," replied he.

"Come, then, Sir, stand on the defence."

"Why, Baroness," said he, "you do not require to be told, that while Almighty God requires of all to obey his commands, he invites some to advance still farther, and follow his counsels. Amongst these counsels, that of voluntary poverty is recommended by these words—'If you would be perfect, go and sell all that you have;' and to this is added a rich promise—'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'"

"I have always supposed," said Geraldine, "that poverty of spirit meant humility."

"You may safely think so still," replied he, "for in this sense it is understood by many saints and divines; while others, and amongst them St Basil, appropriate it to those who voluntarily became poor for His sake, who gave us the living example of this virtue throughout his whole life: born in a stable, he had not afterwards whereon to lay his head, till in death he was wrapped in grave clothes, and laid in a sepulchre by the bounty of a stranger. Poverty is, indeed, the very foundation of religious perfection, for our Saviour declares—'If any of you do not renounce all he possesses, he cannot be my disciple;' and this vow of poverty therefore takes precedence of other vows. Now, though I am willing to grant that this renouncement cannot always be literal, and must be taken in the sense of a willingness of heart to renounce all, still the literal fulfilment of the precept is the surest step to attain the other, for it is proved to be far easier to cease to love those things from which we have parted, than to keep the heart disengaged from them while present."

"Well, Sir," cried the Baroness, "I have nothing left but the bare necessities of life, and I rejoice at it. Pray is not my way just as good as giving up all my fortune at once by vow?"

"It is the way in which Almighty God designs you to serve him," replied Mr Bernard, "and therefore it is for you the best way; but had he called you to the entire renouncement of yourself by vow, it would have been a still greater favour, for the relation of ourselves to God by vow, is of so great value in his sight, that the fathers term it a second baptism."

"Bless me, Sir, you make me very uncomfortable," cried the Baroness. "After all I have done to please God, that you give the preference to nuns; I shall dislike them now through jealousy. Pray, Sir, do you mean that all my good works are unacceptable to God, because I have not offered myself by vow?"

"I repeat, Baroness, that I do not believe God ever called upon you for more than you have done, therefore rest assured that he is pleased by your offering to him his own gifts, in the way he has appointed."

"Then, Sir, I will give up my jealousy of the nuns, and go on in the old way. Indeed, I am too old to be changing my mode of life. But do you not know many persons like me in the world, whose hearts are so detached from their riches, that they are far more acceptable to Almighty God than many a nun, who having relinquished a great deal in her time of fervour, becomes gradually attached to the few things allowed her? because, Sir, I have been told that this is the case."

"Assuredly I do. I consider the case of a tepid and relaxed religious to be deplorable indeed, both in this world and the next. Woe to her, who heaps up superfluous things under pretence of devotion, on any motive whatever,—who is fond of receiving presents,—who forgets, that by virtue of her vow, she can possess nothing, having only permission to use that which belongs to the sisterhood in general. A nun, in fact, is not really poor in the gospel sense, and, therefore, is faithless to her vow, if, when she is deprived of all things, she does not rejoice in this conformity to the poverty of Jesus Christ. The Church is express in enforcing the rigour of poverty in those who have voluntarily embraced it, by forbidding, in the Council of Lateran, any religious the possession of anything, or the personal use of any money. Any religious retaining any money, unless given him by his superior for some commission, must be separated from the participation of the holy mysteries; and should money or goods be found after his death, which he had secreted, he shall be deprived of the prayers of the community, and of Christian burial. This was confirmed by succeeding popes, and by the Council of Trent."

"Sir, this is very severe!"

"Not, if you look closely into the subject, for you will find a parallel case in that of Ananias and his wife, related in the Acts of the Apostles. No human authority had obliged Ananias to sell his land; it was a voluntary act, but having once dedicated the

profits to God, it was a violation of that contract to retain any part of it for his own use ; and the lie he told was not unto man but unto the Holy Ghost, and received its awful punishment. In the few instances which occurred in the early ages, of religious secreting money, it was thrown into his grave with these words, — ‘ Let thy money go with thee to perdition.’ ”

“ Bless me, Sir, let us talk of something pleasanter.”

“ We will speak then,” continued Mr Bernard, “ of the nun who is truly rich. It is she who desires nothing, for then she may be said to possess all things, who having renounced all earthly possessions, and denied herself every remembrance of them, has attained to the third degree of holy poverty, which is, to keep the heart disengaged from the best and holiest things, that nothing created may cause infidelity to the Creator.”

“ These three degrees of advance to perfection,” said Geraldine, “ are contained equally, I conclude, in the other religious vows. We first devote our person and personal possessions ; next our memory and will ; lastly, our heart and the higher faculties of the mind.”

“ My dear,” said the Baroness, “ you cannot say that the heart is the last thing given in your case, for was it not the heart which first made the offering ? ”

“ Yes, Baroness ! the heart made the first offering—but of what ? Of everything but itself. It was very liberal in that which distressed it not. It said, ‘ Take, O Lord, my fortune, for I love it not ; take from me the luxuries of life, for I despise them ; take away all acquaintances, and social amusements, for I am wearied of them. Take, at the same time, all fond remembrance of these former pursuits and pleasures, and to ensure this, take all my intellectual associates into thy holy service—memory, will, understanding ; for I am queen, and I command them to be thine.’ God then says, ‘ Give me thyself wholly ; and as thou sayest, all these thy subjects must be mine.’ The heart then tries to spring to God, and finding a number of hidden guests which weigh it down, mourns to perceive, that although the first to make the offering, it is the last to become a perfect holocaust.

“ It seems to me,” continued Geraldine, “ that if either of the three religious vows were fulfilled in perfection, the other two must necessarily be so likewise ; for the heart that is truly ‘ poor,’ possesses God alone ; the heart that is truly ‘ chaste,’ admits God alone : and the heart that is truly ‘ obedient,’ listens to God alone.”

"My dear," said the Baroness, "you will have to obey some virago; so don't talk of obeying God alone."

"Lady de Grey means," said Mr Bernard, "that whatever may be the commands of her mother-superior, she will listen as to the voice of God."

"Without hearing the whispers," added Geraldine, "of the will and understanding."

"Ah, the understanding!" said Mr Bernard, "there is the difficulty—for it is seldom disposed to submit; and I rather suspect, Lady de Grey, that in your interior dominions, if the heart be queen, the understanding is king."

"And the will prime-minister?" added she, smiling.

"I did not say that," returned he, also smiling. "But what post in your dominions do you give to the other faculty of the mind, memory?"

"Oh, memory is the old queen-dowager, who would fain prattle of bye-gone days, were she permitted, but she has lately been amused into silence by a little winnowing machine, with which she separates from the queen's jewels the tinselled dust and chaff which has accumulated."

"As for my world within," cried the Baroness, "the king never had more than the crown matrimonial, and even then he was henpecked. But to leave all this pretty poetical view of things, my dear ma'am, and to come to my confessions, in plain prose, I never was, am not, and never will be, obedient, therefore I can't be a nun you see. Liberty is to me as the air I breathe!"

"But if that be your only objection, Baroness," said Mr Bernard smiling, "I will impart to you a wonderful secret, by which a nun can follow her own will all her life long, and yet attain perfection."

"Come, Sir, tell me this moment."

"She takes her superior's will, makes it her own, and thus accomplishes, without pain or difficulty, all that obedience requires."

"None of your Jesuitical conundrums for me, Sir. Two persons can never have the same will."

"Yes they can, Baroness, by the help of God; but this wonderful secret is discovered only by those to whom he has given the grace of a vocation to the religious life."

At this moment the Baroness's maid entered the room with a long flaring tallow-candle, to light her lady to bed.

"What! Mrs Kay, am I to go to bed before my company have left me?"

"As you please, my lady."

"Well, I don't please to leave Lady de Grey."

But the old lady was at length persuaded to go to bed, on the promise that Geraldine would visit her when there, and join in the litany, which her maid repeated, and she responded to, every night, "for a happy death." Nothing could exceed the devotion with which the Baroness repeated the words "Merciful Jesus have mercy on me;" and moved to a warmer feeling of regard and respect than she had yet entertained, our heroine, at the close of the litany, besought her blessing, and retired, just as her carriage was announced below.

CHAPTER XV.

Ah! torture not the fluttering heart
By lingering farewell.

"I CAN wait no longer," said Geraldine on the following morning, as a light double rap was heard at the hall door; "I begin to feel either a presentiment or nervous apprehension of being altogether detained; and if my future sisters arrive not by their own appointment, I shall linger here no more." As the footsteps approached, her heart beat, and a sickening dread overcame her, as she turned expecting to see her father; but the visitor was Mr Everard. His step,—so unlike his usual rapid tread, that she had mistaken it for that of General Carrington,—bespoke the dejection of his heart. He took Geraldine's offered hand, and continued to hold it, as he sat beside her in silence: at length releasing it with a slight movement of irritation, he said, "I have lived too long."

"Ah no!" cried Geraldine, moved by the affliction of this old and faithful friend; and she hastened to console him for her loss, by a picture of the happiness she should enjoy, and by the promise to nurse him on his dying bed, should life and health be granted her; but Mr Everard not only grieved for her loss, but was vexed that she could not remain a quiet rational Catholic,

enjoying the many blessings God had given her, and dispensing good to all around her, as the widow of him whose noble name she bore ; and the more he spoke, the more irritated he became, so that at length telling her he had no patience with her folly, and that his heart was breaking, he sank into silence, which Geraldine knew not how to break. She continued therefore to sit by this attached and beloved old friend, in silence like his own. He had not changed, but they could no longer sympathize, for she had been led by the grace of God beyond his spiritual experience, and he looked on her as on a dreamer. Still he sighed, for her dreams, he admitted, gave her a joy which he vain would have shared. Geraldine also pondered, and she also sighed, but her sigh was not for herself, and to the sigh succeeded a bright and grateful smile as she looked up to her future home.

The presence of Mr Everard reminded her of those who had been deputed by God to aid her in her path towards Him, without any consciousness, on their part, that they were to work only for a limited time. Her uncles had each in her childhood assisted her religious attainment. The Warden by theological instructions, the humble vicar by the living sermons of his example. Her first governess had, with the Warden, impressed her with a deep sense of the respect due to the visible Church ; her last governess, with her uncle Edmund, of the life hidden with Christ in God. When she began to feel that each principle might assist instead of opposing the other, and to perceive that they were parts taken from a whole, Mr Everard assisted her to enter the Catholic Church, and she was then given, and she truly believed by the same guiding hand, to Sir Eustace de Grey. Geraldine in this retrospect acknowledged that she was not, at the time of her conversion, sufficiently matured in Catholicity, to have embraced the religious state ; for although she possessed more knowledge than many of its children of the vast treasures of the Church, it required the constant example of one congenial to her, for the practical working of Catholic truth to be received by such a high-spirited and fondly indulged creature as Geraldine Carrington. But Eustace de Grey had well fulfilled the part assigned him ; and then, his task accomplished, he too had been withdrawn, and his cherished pupil left to enter the solitudes of the religious life. She was again lost in wonder, love, and praise ! The long silence was at length broken by Mr Everard's giving fresh vent to his disappointment, that, on be-

coming a Catholic, she had not filled that post which he *esteemed* so useful, so essential, for the mutual good understanding of both parties,—that of a moderate liberal Catholic, for the conciliation of Protestants.

“Mr Everard,” said Geraldine, smiling, “I do not consider the conciliation of Protestants to be my primary duty. Truly grateful shall I be, if in following the dictates of my conscience, I soothe instead of alienating the devout of that body, but never by the grace of God will I take any step, or be withheld from taking it, by that sole motive. ‘Explanation, not concession.’ was Eustace de Grey’s motto; and like him, I am ever ready to give the former, however wearied by the repetition of questions, which for three hundred years have been answered.”

“Well!” sighed Mr Everard, “we must all save our souls in the manner our conscience dictates, and certainly if you insist on being a nun, you could not have chosen an order less objectionable. The order of our Lady of Mercy should not be termed a new order, for it is very ancient, and has never become obsolete. The duties only have varied with the necessities of the times. When it was founded by James the First, of Arragon, in consequence of a vow made during captivity, the brothers, in addition to the usual vows, took that of redeeming captives, and the heroic deeds of those holy men, must inspire respect amongst Protestants as well as Catholics. In the present day, the Brothers of Mercy, who are mostly settled in Germany, attend prisons, hospitals, and poor schools; performing the same good works as *Les Sœurs Grises*, and the Sisters of Charity. I am well pleased that a female community should bear the sweet name of Mercy, which I am surprised should not have been the case long ere this.”

“There is in Rome,” said Geraldine, “a female community, entitled ‘Le Sorelle della Misericordia.’ I went with the Contessa to visit their convent, or, as it is always termed in Italy, their monastery; and also saw their hospital, with which I was delighted; and just such an hospital, where within the enclosure the sick and dying are watched day and night by the appointed sisters, I trust to see erected with the convent, in the great court of the abbey ruin.”

“But why,” said Mr Everard, “can you not be satisfied to be a benefactress to this order, and yet keep your usual habits of life? for let me tell you, that all the sensible rational Catholics,

are as much, if not more annoyed, than your Protestant friends, by the imprudent ardour of your conduct. 'Why,' say they, 'can she not remain in the same position of life she filled, before she embraced Catholicity? Why is she to rush on to a state not required by the Church, and strengthen the notion which Protestants entertain, that we are always in the clouds, and are never guided by common-sense in anything?'

"My dear friend," said Geraldine, "I trust, by the grace of God, to act more generously towards Him, than your timid or tepid Catholic critics would wish me to do. In fact, had I listened to the worldly-wise counsels I have received during my Catholic life, I should not only have resisted the grace of God, but greatly disedified my pious Protestant friends, who though holding an incomplete religion, are faithful to their belief, and justly expect to see, in Catholics, the same fidelity to their more perfect faith. I am quite aware, that guided by human feeling, I might better remain the lady of rank and wealth in the world, but how then could I venture to petition, in the Litany common to both Protestant and Catholic, 'From the neglect of thy holy inspirations, O Lord! deliver us!'"

Geraldine began to feel these well-meant but ineffectual counsels very trying; her head ached intensely, and the nervous apprehension of being detained in London, until her father should arrive, increased her distress. Every carriage that passed on that side of the square, she feared might be his travelling equipage; and, when at length, a carriage did stop, and a knock was given, she started up, and uttering a hasty "God bless you," to Mr Everard, took flight; not to her own apartment, but to one of those prepared for the companions of her journey to —. While listening in apprehension for the sound of the loved and dreaded voice of the General, she was inexpressibly relieved to find, that the newly-arrived were the future occupants of the rooms, and she hastened to give them welcome, Mr Everard having hastily departed. One of these was a lady, who, from her early childhood, had desired to consecrate herself to God in the religious life, and whose pure and fervent piety had already inspired our heroine with sincere respect and affection. The other, like herself, a convert, had been till now personally a stranger, but many sympathies bound their hearts together, and she felt the tie of religious sisterhood already binding them in permanent attachment.

Early on the following morning, the little band of aspirants to the veil, in which Jane Saunders was included, started from the metropolis to the sea-port town, whence the packet sailed. After the parting from her loved Isabel, Geraldine's heart became lighter every mile they travelled, yet she could not entirely divest herself of the apprehension, that before she could get on board, some one would be lying in wait to prevent her. It was late at night, when they arrived at the chosen hotel in —, but the steam-packet was not to start till the afternoon of the following day, which enabled them to rest in peace till the hour for mass, which they attended in a little chapel, not far from the hotel. Here Geraldine and her companions prepared to offer up the holy sacrifice and communion, for all strengthening grace and protection during the passage, and for blessings on the land they were about to leave. Geraldine's previous agitation was now calmed, but she felt her spirits subdued and weak, and was comforted after waiting for some time, to see the priest enter the sanctuary, who, before he commenced the mass, turned round to the congregation with a written paper, and read, "Your prayers are humbly requested for the repose of the soul of the Lady Winefride Blount, who departed this life on the second instant. May her soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace."

Where can the heart better know of earthly bereavement than before the altar of God? The shock was great, but consolation abounded, and Geraldine earnestly besought that all the spiritual benefit derived from the holy sacrifice and communion, might be shared by the precious soul of her much honoured and beloved friend, and was given grace to feel, at the conclusion of the service, strength and freedom of heart, as this almost last tie to earth had changed its position without weakening its strength, and had added one more to those which sweetly bound her to heaven.

A large sealed packet of letters and papers awaited Geraldine's return to the hotel, renewing her apprehensions of detention, when she saw the handwriting of General Carrington, and was told, that the gentleman who brought it had been twice to see her the preceding evening, and again that morning. She now, by fervent aspirations, endeavoured to obtain strength and calm of mind, should her father, as she concluded he would,

return thither, or else seek her on board the vessel ; and without venturing to open the envelope, continued alternately to watch the door and the timepiece, when her expected visitor arrived, and proved to be once more Don Carlos.

The relief of seeing any one but her father, was so great, that Geraldine was scarcely troubled or disquieted by his presence. He brought fresh petitions from his sister, in addition to the letters, of which he was the bearer, and the assurance that to hear she had changed her mind, would cause the greatest joy to all.

"And, I have farther desired to speak to you, madam," continued Don Carlos, "to atone for the warmth and consequent injustice, with which, at my last interview, I mentioned General Carrington. He has been a benefactor to my family during times of bitter calamity and adversity. As a protector, more than as a lover, he gave a home to Beatrice, and his marriage with a daughter of the house of Mendoza, was concealed from the liberal party, that, by seeming neutral, he might the more befriend us. The prolonged secrecy, however, of after-years, must have been for your sake, Senora."

"For my sake !" repeated Geraldine.

"Yes: for greatly as he is now attached to Beatrice, he has always spoken of the cruelty of making any change in your fortune and prospects, before such an alliance as he concluded you would form, should take place. And now, madam, although I had determined not to intrude any mention of myself that could pain you during this last earthly interview, I will venture to ask for congratulations on the only subject which can possess for you sufficient interest—I am, by the grace of God, like yourself, about to enter a religious order."

"Thank God !" exclaimed our heroine, with an expression of such true sympathy and regard, that Don Carlos was repaid for all his anxiety and pain on her account.

"I have, during some years," continued he, "turned my thoughts towards the step I am now about to take, but your unexpected widowhood aroused feelings I had supposed conquered. Now I am cured by a far less painful stroke ; I cannot dare to be the rival of my God ; I yield every wish—every claim—I seek only to emulate your courageous example, and still in the world, though dead to it, to become one of the Society of Jesus."

Geraldine found herself at length on the deck of the packet with her companions, amidst all the clamour and hurry of departure. She held the letters from her father unopened in her hand; but the last interview with Don Carlos had brought such unexpected peace, that she no longer dreaded their contents, and before the vessel was lost to the sight of him who still watched its progress from the pier of —, she had become acquainted with the interesting details of the history already sketched to her. The agitation of the past fortnight, however, and the fatigue of rapid travelling, made her little able to bear the rough sea into which they now entered, and she was taken to the cabin with her head so confused and aching, that no thought or wish was distinct, save that of finding the shelter and peace of a convent.

CHAPTER XVI.

Hark, the vesper hymn is stealing
O'er the waters soft and clear,
Nearer yet, and nearer pealing,
Now it bursts upon the ear.
Jubilate, Amen.

Moore.

AFTER a stormy and tedious passage, it was sweet repose to enter the lovely harbour of —, and glide between its verdant coasts into the city. At an accustomed landing-place, the vessel had stopped to put some of the passengers on shore, and one gentleman had come thence on deck inquiring for the English party, and introducing himself to them as one of the chaplains of the Catholic bishop of the city. An Irish welcome beamed in his benevolent countenance, and during the few miles which remained before they reached the quay, he became the protecting friend to all. It was just five o'clock, the vesper hour in the order of Mercy, when they landed, but the service was over by the time the travellers had walked thither. Their reverend guide rang at the great door of the convent, and it was soon opened by a lay sister, whose countenance told them they were expected. Behind her appeared a young novice, who, after a hasty glance, flitted from them, apparently to give notice of their

arrival; for before they had all crossed the threshold, the door of the community room was thrown open, and the mother-superior, and several of the professed nuns advanced to meet their new sisters. Geraldine was too full of emotion to speak, but this emotion was of so happy a kind, that it shone in her countenance, and supplied the place of words. To find herself once more surrounded by religious, and, after all her struggles, doubts, and difficulties, to be amongst them as an aspirant to the same blessed life, was a thought so exquisite, that her soul seemed suspended from earth in foretaste of its union with her God, and the soft voices of the sisters came as from a distance to her ear. Amongst them mingled tones which told of Scotland, and with a momentary hope, which reason soon told her was delusion, she thought of Katherine Graham. The voice was that of sister Margaret, a high-born, but humble-minded Scotch lady, who had been several years professed in this order. She inquired which was the mother-superior, and as she was only answered by smiles, fixed on the apparently eldest, but this sister, smilingly, assured her, that she was only "Sister Mary Placida," adding, as she bowed to a younger nun who stood near her, "this is our reverend mother."

Geraldine looked at the thoughtful holy countenance of her mother in religion, and, raising her hand to her lips, said, "I trust to prove myself your dutiful child."

The English sisters were then taken to see the chapel and choir, their cells, and the novices' apartments, in which they were to become as little children. After taking some refreshment in the refectory, they returned to the community room, except Geraldine, who stole back into the choir, and thence into the chapel. The deepening twilight threw all into shadow, save where the ever-burning lamp shed its soft light around the tabernacle. The sacristan was occupied in arranging the altar for the morrow, but in a short time she withdrew, and first looking around, to be secure from any living witness, our grateful Geraldine threw herself prostrate before the altar. "O Jesus!" cried she, "my God, and my all, behold me thine for ever! Receive my whole being, my will, my understanding, and all the powers of my soul and spirit. Thou gavest them, and to thee I devote them,—to thee who hast chosen me to dwell beneath the roof, where thou thyself dost dwell. O let me retire, in spirit as in form, for ever from the world, and take thy

hidden life for the rule and copy of mine. Give me grace to honour thy silence, on our altar, by a constant spirit of holy recollection and prayer, thy poverty, obedience, and adorable sanctity,—by detachment from all things. Above all! O loving bread of eternal life, remove all obstacles to my frequently and worthily receiving thee; and grant me so tender a devotion to this holy mystery, that I may live in thee and thou in me, for ever!" As Geraldine thus prayed, the bell sounded the five minutes' warning before the service of matins and lauds in the choir, which in this order are said over-night, and she returned to the stall she had been told was for her, and remained there until the community, including her English sisters, assembled. To her great satisfaction, Jane, although to be a lay-sister, was admitted, whose rosy dimpled face shone with delight.

What blessed peace reigned in the heart of Geraldine, as she watched each veiled form enter, and make the genuflection at the grating of the choir, before taking her place noiselessly; every movement proving her recollection of the presence of her heavenly spouse. Six o'clock then struck, and the Angelus, with the double-toll of this order, sounded from the convent bell, bidding welcome to the new daughters of the blessed Mary, who joined their voices in the angelic salutation, while their hearts added, "The mercies of my God will I sing for ever!"

On leaving the choir, the English sisters were informed the bishop had arrived to see them, and with equal surprise and pleasure they heard themselves greeted by this benevolent and venerable prelate. Had they before felt in "a strange land," his welcome would have reassured them; but warm-hearted Ireland can prove a strange land to no one who possesses a heart to respond to kindness.

It was some weeks before the new postulants were required to keep strictly the rules of the noviceship; and in this time they had become familiarized to the routine of the day, the times and places of strict silence, the different forms to be observed, and the duties of the choir. They had also been taken severally with the sisters to the public institutions for the sick, and to the private dwellings of the poor—more as a recreation than a duty, and every thing was carefully avoided that could hurry or oppress the "*infant* band;" for such, in convent life, they were.

As the time approached, so anxiously expected, when our

heroine and her companions were to be publicly received as novices, the former, who had expected to feel only joy, found an annoyance in her path which troubled her the more, as she had sincerely desired to resign her will, on crossing the threshold of the convent. This attack of self-will, which we record, because it was the last, was on the subject of the secular attire in which the candidate for the religious garb is always expected to appear on the day of her clothing, and to which Geraldine's heart for a-while refused to submit. Not only had she laid her long tresses in the tomb of her earthly love, but, before leaving the Hall, she had given to her young cousins and their mother the ornaments and wardrobe which had become useless to her, and to think or speak again on the subject of dress was most irksome to her. She listened, however, to the representations made to her, and owned, on reflection, how much there was of human feeling in wishing to retain her mourning garb, and how singular and ostentatious it would be to appear thus, when surrounded by her sister-candidates; and having thus conquered herself on this point, she kept to her resolution of yielding entirely to the nun appointed to superintend the toilette of the postulants, even should she bespangle her like Columbine.

There was, however, no reason to dread this result from the simple and elegant taste of sister Josephine, whose arrangements proceeded without farther molestation, that they might be completed before the distant preparation for the ceremony of reception, which begins a month previously, by spiritual lecture in the noviceship appropriate to the event, accompanied by pious exhortations and encouragements on the part of the mistress. Mother Juliana fulfilled her duty on this, as on every other occasion, with the calm simplicity which marked her character. She believed herself far less fit than many of her sisters for the important post assigned her, but being there by the appointment of her superiors, she permitted nothing to discourage or elate her; and no one could perceive, by word or look, that any internal struggle had been requisite to overcome her natural feelings of diffidence and repugnance to the work assigned her. Geraldine, on her side, came to the noviceship with equal simplicity, being well aware, that in the religious life, she had yet much to learn. She was not wearied by the repetition of the same warnings and encouragement, remembering the words of St Paul,—“To repeat the same things unto you, to me indeed it

is not grievous, and for you it is safe ;” and reflecting, that if this highly favoured apostle, who, in the revelation given him, had abundance of material for the spiritual entertainment of his hearers, thought it more profitable for them to hear the oft-repeated injunctions to a holy life,—well might she desire for herself the same course to be pursued.

On entering the convent, she had taken the infancy of Jesus, as the mystery on which her mind should ponder and her heart delight: there to find inexhaustible sources for example, encouragement, and reward, in the life immediately before her. In remembrance, and in honour of the Deity, who became a silent infant, Geraldine was silent: remembering and knowing His obedience, she was obedient in heart as in deed: and the precious secrets of the hidden life, which she had already deeply studied and accepted, she now willingly heard as if for the first time; for how could her heart refuse the repetition of instructions on subjects which had become, through the contemplation of the infancy of Jesus, the food of her spiritual being?

It was just at this time that our heroine was invited by the mother-superior to pass half an hour with her, during the few days of severe indisposition which had attacked the mistress of the novices. This invitation was not intended as a command; but the slightest intimation of the superioress's wishes was sufficient for Geraldine, and she well knew that these short periods of spiritual converse would be among the most profitable of the day. And thus it proved; for not only was it beneficial to her mind to give utterance to the thoughts which had accumulated during the day, but she at length won from the mother-superior more of confidential advice, and gained a greater insight into that holy soul, than she had yet been privileged to obtain; for in these conferences Geraldine's whole soul was opened, and few could have withheld their own.

One evening that our heroine had taken her usual kneeling posture by the reverend mother, and had placed her clasped hands in hers, the mother-superior bade her give God thanks for the grace of religious submission and obedience. “Your mistress,” said she, “reports well of your docility and meekness hitherto; and although you have as yet had no trials, she argues well from your whole deportment. You well know, dear sister, that to obtain and preserve the grace of religious obedience, the precursive grace of humility is essential. Without

this virtue be deeply and firmly rooted in the heart, the sweetest and most ready obedience will fail in the hour of trial."

"And therefore I cannot depend on mine," said our heroine; "for I am very far from possessing humility."

"It is the humble who feel most the want of perfect humility," said the mother-superior; "others are ever in a state of self-defence."

"I fear," said Geraldine, "to have unconsciously deceived Mother Juliana, by a compliance and suavity which results only from my sense of the fitness of things relative to her position and mine. She, a professed nun, of several years' standing, holding a post of great trust and importance in her convent; I, not yet even a novice, with all my religious career before me, and its virtues known only in theory. How can I avoid paying her a respectful deference and obedience?"

"And what is humility," said the mother-superior, "but a just view of others and of ourselves, or what you term a 'sense of the fitness of things,' from a consideration of their relative position. You and your sister postulants are the last in this religious house, and you feel it to be so; are not disturbed at it; but willing to look up to all, as your superiors in the religious life. Is not this humility?"

"I think it is my judgment that is convinced," said Geraldine; "my sense of justice, of truth. I am in a humble position; and as I am contented with it, I may seem to be humble; but supposing I were in Mother Juliana's place, and she in mine, I should, from the same love of justice and truth, esteem myself no longer the last in the house; and I have been thinking," continued she, "that the greatest obstacle to humility is the love of truth."

"Oh! no," cried the mother-superior, "all the virtues must harmonize, and not embarrass each other."

"Yes," said Geraldine, "all the attributes of God must harmonize, to constitute perfection; but as there are some attributes of God not given to the imitation of man, such as His omnipotence, omnipresence, &c., so there are virtues which belong to man alone, such as gratitude, contrition, holy fear, humility; and inasmuch as justice and truth are attributes of God, and humility is not, so whenever truth and humility clash, truth, being the essence of the Divinity, must prevail."

"You are getting very metaphysical," said the mother-

superior ; “but I think that you will find your difficulties removed, by considering that we are required to think humbly of ourselves, but not of the office we hold,—we then preserve perfect truth ; for the more highly we esteem the post of trust and authority we hold in the house of God, the more we must feel our own incompetency to fill it. This is well proved in Mother Juliana. There is no one more exact, nay, even scrupulously so, in requiring that all respect shall be paid to the important office she holds, and at the same time no one who humbles herself more before God and her superior, for what she deems the imperfect manner in which she upholds and fulfils the duties of her charge.” As the mother-superior gave this testimony to the humble fidelity of the mistress of novices, the still weightier charge she herself held was in her mind ; and, as she paused and sighed, the tears rose to her eyes.

Geraldine looked on that youthful brow, where thought and care were thus early stamped, though not so much so as to destroy the placid and confiding expression given by heaven. She then thought of the contrast which that countenance presented when at recreation amongst the novices, over whom she only held a distant and rarely enforced authority, and amongst whom she was once more the happy sister.

Geraldine pressed her hand in silence, and hoped she would speak of herself ; but she did not, through humility, which was indeed profound. At length she said—“ A sister should neither seek nor shrink from responsibility. If a charge be given her by her superiors, she should take it as coming from God, and seek in it His honour and glory alone. Whatever mistakes she might commit in the discharge of this trust, she should humble herself for them, but not suffer these mere errors of judgment to cause disquietude, when conscious of having had a pure motive.”

“ Whatever merit I may have hereafter in obeying my mistress of novices,” said our heroine, as she gave welcome to the mother-superior at her next little conference, “ I shall have none in obeying my reverend mother ; for I find in it not only no effort, but sweet comfort.”

“ I perceive that you do,” said the superioress, “ and it was for this I bade you bless God, who has thus early bestowed on you the grace of religious obedience.”

“ I have been considering since yesterday,” said Geraldine, “ that obedience is but a conditional virtue.”

“What mean you by that?”

“I term that virtue conditional,” said Geraldine, “which requires a clause, and which in certain cases would cease to be a virtue. The virtue of obedience requires the clause of ‘in all that is not sin,’ when exercised towards man. To make obedience, then, a positive virtue, it must be, as in the religious state, the effect of self-renouncement; and for the promotion of God’s glory in the peace and order it must produce in the houses devoted to His service.”

“It is God you obey, in obeying your superior, as you already know and feel,” said the superioress.

“It is that,” said Geraldine, “that will make me even willingly yield my understanding, that precious gift of God, and of which no human being can deprive me. The submission of the will was never difficult to me, even towards those who have no claim to it; for I like to see people happy in their own way, and I care not for times, and seasons, and external acts. The submission of the understanding also, is not difficult in matters which do not affect the moral principle; but then, to curb the freedom of this inward world—to touch the balance of justice there poisoning—to bid the weights mount up, and the empty scale descend—the hand and voice must be consecrated by God’s delegated power!”

“You have now read all our holy rule,” replied the mother-superior, “which I am bound to enforce; your mind, therefore, may be perfectly at rest respecting the ‘moral principle.’ This rule is next to the Gospel in our regard. It would be impossible for any superior to enforce it, and yet infringe on God’s commandments, for his holy spirit breathes through every part of it; and, as I have heard you say, it might have been written by St John, so lovely is the charity it prescribes, and the peace which pervades the whole. Were it possible for any one to command you to do or say anything obviously contrary to this our rule, you would not be bound to obey.”

“I am satisfied,” said Geraldine: “the holy rule of this order is a summary of Christian doctrine, and a commentary on the beatitudes. In performing it I must fulfil the adorable will of God; and blessed, therefore, for ever be the vow of obedience which will ensure this. No one can live in greater peace than she who, after due consideration of every part of the life proposed to her, accepts it, as comprising all that can best nourish

and conduct her soul to God ; and then resigns herself entirely to it, without care, without solicitude, without a thought of self-guidance or opinion. This obedience, which is called 'blind,' can scarcely be so termed, unless it be the voluntary blindness of one who, having first ascertained that the road he is about to take leads to his desired home, resigns himself in sleep to his guide, without waking to look at every sign-post or mile-stone on the way."

"The obedience due to those who hold the higher offices, must be likewise rendered by the novice, to all who may be appointed to direct her," said the superioress ; "but a humble and sincere spirit of obedience will make this likewise easy to you."

"If there be a race of beings for whom I feel commiseration," said Geraldine, "it is those in subordinate office ; those who hold delegated authority. I speak of the world, for I expect not to find in a regular convent any caprice, jealousy, or cruel cowardice, from the higher powers, which would lead them, in times of danger to themselves, to desert those who act under them. Such was the faithless Charles to Stafford. In convent government, it appears to me, there should be as implicit obedience rendered to the one appointed by the mother-superior as to herself, for in disobeying the delegate I should disobey the principal, as in disobeying the principal I should disobey God. But in this obedience, which, I trust, you will find me invariably pay to every sister appointed over me, there is no humility : it will only result, as I before said, from my sense of what is just and rational, and the course to be pursued by every one possessed of common-sense."

"You are determined," said the mother-superior, smiling, "to resist all vain glory."

"But just imagine, dear reverend mother, the unfortunate delegate, who whether sacristan, infirmarian, or whatever post she held, should find me independent of every command but your's."

"Indeed she would be an object for my sincere commiseration," said the mother-superior ; "but, as you justly observe, such a position of affairs would never be permitted in a convent, where the principle of obedience, to be consistent, must pervade every rank. In our visitation of the sick this humble submission is essential. All must be calm, and sweet, and edifying, in

the manner of the sisters when they leave the enclosure ; and to ensure this, the wishes of the elder sister must be law to the younger."

Geraldine thought of, and repeated that part of the rule which related to the deportment of the sisters, and to the feeling which would ensure it :

"Two sisters shall always go out together: the greatest caution and gravity must be observed passing through the streets: walking neither in slow nor hurried pace, not stopping to converse, nor saluting those whom they meet, keeping close without leaning, preserving recollection of mind, and going forward as if they expected to see their divine Redeemer in each poor habitation, since he has said, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I.'"

CHAPTER XVII.

"Hail solitude! how sweet thy shade,
For holy contemplation made."
Here will I sit, to peace consigned,
And leave a troubled world behind;
Till angels waft me hence, to rest
In Paradise among the blest:
With hermits, there to taste of bliss,
Who walked with God, in shades like this.

Ode by Jones of Nayland.

WITH grateful heart Geraldine saw arrive the eve of the spiritual retreat, which commences eight days previously to the reception of novices, and terminates after mass and communion on the morning of the ceremony. After she and her sister recluses had received the parting blessing from the mother-superior, and from the community their sisterly kiss and promise of prayers, they went immediately to the choir, to read the meditation proper for that night in presence of the blessed sacrament. Here Geraldine raised her heart in thanksgiving for the blessed prospect before her. She was on the eve of her spiritual journey into the desert, and already did she enter into the rapture which her soul was about to enjoy. She had, indeed, with the psalmist, longed for the time when, alone with God, apart from creatures, and all human sources of refreshment dried up in her heart, the dew of

divine grace from the sanctuary might refresh her spirit to behold his power and glory. She had watched for her divine spouse from the dawn of day—her soul had thirsted after him. O, by how many titles did her whole being belong to him, and now her soul was replenished with his benediction, and filled with rapturous joy! Never since the spiritual favours bestowed on her previous to her widowhood, had Geraldine received such abundant graces. She began the points of her meditation, but her mind grasped at once all that could be written, and her heart required no stimulus. “My beloved to me, and I to him!” all was comprised in this union of the creature with her Creator—the redeemed and her Redeemer, the sanctified and the sanctifier, the penitent in renewed innocence, and the God of all purity and love.

Geraldine entered her cell, and its very walls seemed strengthened in peace. “O, whence is this to me!” cried she, sinking on her knees, “that thou, my God, shouldst visit me with such abundant mercy? Well do I know, that in an instant all can be withdrawn, and I be left a trembling, desolate creature. All this is thy free gift, therefore will I praise, and bless, and love thee with all my being.”

Thus passed the eight days of Geraldine’s retreat, with but one exception occurring to disturb this holy peace. This was a return of that strong attraction to the cloister, which had before induced her to resign this her first vocation, and which the spiritual consolations experienced during this retreat seemed to favour; but our heroine well knew this to be a temptation from the enemy, and therefore resisted it with success, and hailed, with equal joy to that with which she had entered her retreat, the happy morning which bade her “come forth from the desert leaning upon her beloved.”

Little mattered it to Geraldine that crowds were assembled to witness the ceremony, or that she was once more arrayed in bridal attire. She felt nothing but the presence of the blessed sacrament, of the bishop and priests of God, and of the holy brethren of the religious orders, who were around her. Among them also stood that English priest, whose feelings were the most personally interested in the sacred scene.

Before the procession of religious moved towards the choir, headed by the cross-bearer, and singing the hymn “O, Gloriosa Virginum,” Geraldine and her companions had asked, on their

knees, the mother-superior's blessing, and her permission to take the names they had chosen in religion.

The sermon was preached from the altar by the provincial of the Capuchin Friars, who was the confessor extraordinary to the convent, during which the postulants were seated before him ; and the glowing picture he drew of the religious life, especially that devoted to " Mercy," came with double effect from one whose unremitting labours, amongst the suffering and dying poor, were well known to all who heard him. At the conclusion of the sermon the postulants were led up the steps of the altar, and thus interrogated severally by the bishop.

" My child, what do you demand ?"

Our heroine, who was the eldest, first replied,

" The mercy of God, and the holy habit of religion."

" Is it with your own free will," said the Bishop, " that you demand the holy habit of religion ?"

" Yes, my lord," replied our heroine.

" Reverend mother," said the Bishop, turning to the superior-ess, " have you made the necessary inquiries, and are you satisfied ?"

" Yes, my lord," replied she.

" My child," continued the Bishop to Geraldine, " have you a firm intention to persevere in religion to the end of your life. and do you hope to have sufficient strength to carry constantly the sweet yoke of our Lord Jesus Christ solely for the love and fear of God ?"

" Relying on the mercy of God," replied Geraldine, " I hope to be able to do so."

The Bishop then said, rising from his chair, " What God has commenced in you may He perfect. May the Lord banish from you the old man with his works."

To which, Geraldine having answered " Amen," she arose from her knees, and made way for each of her companions in turn. When all had replied to the bishop's questions, they retired, with the mother-superior and assistant, to exchange their worldly dress for that of religion.

While this was in progress, the assembled voices of the priests intoned, in solemn chant, the psalm, " In exitu Israel ;" and these deep impressive sounds were prolonged, till a female voice, floating in liquid sweetness, took up another strain, demanding, as the novices were descried slowly advancing, " Quæ est ista,"

&c., "Who is she that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved? Thou art all fair, my beloved, meek and beautiful. Come from Libanus, my spouse, come from Libanus. Come, thou shalt be crowned."

The novices, having returned to the altar, then knelt during the prayers applicable to their change of dress. After which, the mother-superior, receiving the leathern cincture of the order from the bishop, put it on the eldest novice, while he said, "When thou wast younger, thou didst gird thyself, and didst walk where thou wouldst, but when thou shalt be old, another shall gird thee. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Geraldine then kneeling, the mother-assistant took off the simple veil which had merely served, until she should from the altar receive that which was blessed. The bishop, then holding this blessed veil above her head, said, "Receive the white veil, the emblem of inward purity, that thou mayest follow the Lamb without spot, and mayest walk with him in white. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." The mother-superior then fixed the veil, and Geraldine, rising, received the white choir cloak of the order from the bishop, and presenting it to the superioress, was clothed in it, the bishop saying, "May the Lord restore to thee the robe of immortality, which thou didst lose in the prevarication of thy first parent. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." Being now clothed in the full habit of the order, Geraldine again knelt, holding her blessed taper, while the bishop, after sprinkling her with holy water, prayed in an audible voice, extending his hands over her.

Theresa, Emma, and little Jane, then severally advanced, the latter receiving from the hands of the bishop, the lay sister's white apron, worn under the cincture and beads, in badge of servitude. After which, turning to the altar, in the name of each novice, the bishop entoned the "Regnum mundi," &c. "The empire of the world, and all the grandeur of this earth, I have despised for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom I have seen, whom I have loved, in whom I have believed, and towards whom my heart inclineth." After the first sentence, the female voice and full chorus alternately sang the rest, when the novices in unison took up the strain, saying, "My heart hath uttered a good word, I speak my works to the king. I have chosen to be an abject in

the house of my Lord Jesus Christ. Glory be to the Father, &c." As the chorus finished the "*Quem vidi*," the novices prostrated themselves before the altar; the bishop, the religious sisterhood, and all knelt; while, in the solemn Gregorian chant, was sung the "*Veni Creator*."

Many holy and inspiring prayers followed; and then, the mother-assistant directing the novices to rise, conducted them to the mother-superior, to whom, in succession, they knelt; while she, raising, embraced them, and the sisterly kiss of peace and welcome now followed with all the nuns, while the joyous psalm was sung in full chorus, "*Ecce quam bonum*." "*Behold how good, and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity*," &c.; at the end of which, the religious sisters retired from the sanctuary of the chapel, through the choir, into the convent, and the congratulations recommenced with less form and much cheerfulness and affection;—the new novices, with an especial tie of interest, gazing on each other, and giving heartfelt thanks to their heavenly spouse, who had thus called and blessed them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Where duty went, she went : with justice even,
And went with meekness, charity and love
Where'er a tear was dried : a wounded heart
Bound up : a bruised spirit with the dew
Of Sympathy anointed : or a pang
Of honest suffering soothed : or injury
Repeated oft, as oft by love forgiven.

Pollock.

OUR novice, Sister Mary Paula, was now introduced more fully to the external duties of her new life, and began to tread the lanes, alleys, and back streets of the city. With fresh affection, she now listened to that part of her holy rule, which related to "*The visitation of the sick*;" prepared herself quickly, and went immediately to visit the blessed sacrament, to offer to her divine Master the action she was about to perform, to ask from Him the graces necessary to preserve His glory and the salvation of souls. "*O blessed Jesus*," cried she, "*for Thee alone I leave this enclosure, and not for any sensible satisfaction in the indul-*

gence of benevolence and compassion. Be Thou with me, that I may indeed see Thy reflected image in the person of each afflicted fellow-creature, and, in serving him, may serve Thee, who art my God and my all."

At first, Geraldine did not witness anything far exceeding that which she had seen amongst the Irish poor in Elverton, and nothing to equal the picture which her imagination had drawn ; for, until her courage was known, her superior did not send her to the most wretched parts ; but at length, she climbed ladders, crept through trap-doors, and descended into cellars, to scenes of such misery, that she owned to have seen nothing comparable to them.

Being on every occasion the junior sister, her part was to carry the corporal relief, while her senior administered the spiritual, and Geraldine, a grateful listener to the soothing and encouragement, or to the devout prayers of this sister, felt, that indeed they were serving their divine spouse in the persons of his afflicted brethren. Yet all that she could derive of spiritual consolation from this branch of her duty, was incomplete, until she heard the announcement that she was to accompany the mother-superior to the county jail.

"Sick and in prison, and you visited me," was at length to remove from her heart the fearful negative that had been added to the sentence in the convent of — : and as Geraldine walked in the prescribed silence, and mentally said the Litany of our Blessed Lady, by the side of her who was in her confidence,—the united kingdoms,—nay, the whole world, could not have produced a happier being.

The county jail is a magnificent building, conveying no mournful exterior effect, and the entrance and outward court are much like those of a fortified castle : but as Geraldine followed her reverend mother to the inner compartments, and read on the iron doors, "Untried ward," "Condemned ward," the chain of the prisoner sounded in her heart, mingling with the groans of his anguish. Their destination that day was to the female prison, and Geraldine, who had heard from her "sisters," a description of the state of morals and manners amongst the prisoners when they first visited them, was surprised and gratified by their orderly behaviour and cordial welcome. They seemed in their desolation to regard as their true friends the Sisters of Mercy ; and those who had entered hardened in guilt, and those who had been lured and enticed into a first offence, had alike reason to bless

God, who had overruled their present punishment for their soul's good. The convicts were an interesting portion of the prisoners. Many of them were simple country girls, consigned to banishment for their first offence, and some of them had not forgotten the pious instructions given them in their childhood, at the schools of the presentation convents, which order may indeed claim the blessings of the poor. Notwithstanding the subsequent neglect of their religion, truths thus early imbibed, like bread cast on the waters, returned after many days ; and when these poor creatures found that they were going on the wide ocean, and to a strange land, without those means of grace, which, when around them, they had heeded not, their grief and remorse were great : no religious sisters—no priest—no altar. The sisters comforted them with hopes, that if they were sent to Australia, they would find all these blessings ; the Sisters of Charity for that mission being about to depart thither, and the poor creatures' promises were for the time most sincere, that they would keep up amongst themselves, while on board, the practices of devotion they had either learned or revived in the jail.

There was amongst the prisoners, detained for a few months only, an old woman, who was in the constant habit of making the jail her winter residence, either by breaking some window, or performing any other exploit that she had calculated would not involve her in more than was convenient. By the time, however, of her introduction to our heroine, she was beginning to repent of "serving," as she called it, "so hard a master as the devil ;" and promised that the next Christmas, which would be the ninth she had spent in the jail, should, with the help of God, be the last in which she had done her "*old* master's work." To this she had now steadily adhered during the greater part of her last imprisonment, and her active powers were laudably exercised in behalf of all new comers, inducing them to conform to the orderly and pious habits established by the Sisters of Mercy, and promising them that they "would not know themselves, they would be so happy."

Not many days after her visit to the jail, our heroine was taken to the hospital of the House of Industry, which was the most fatiguing labour she had been hitherto engaged in. Before she started with one of the professed sisters who generally attended the public institutions, Geraldine's silent obedience was put to the test in rather an amusing manner. The day was

ntensely hot—not a cloud was to be seen, even in the sky of that oft-rained-on city ; and she had, as the junior sister, just taken up the accustomed basket, when a heavy cotton umbrella was placed in her hand. In her astonishment, she whispered, “ Sister, do you expect rain ? ” “ No, sister,” replied sister Placida, “ but I would advise you not to venture to the hospital without an umbrella. I never go without one to our use ; ” and showing Geraldine that she also held one, she left the enclosure ; our novice followed, and they spoke no more. “ Never venture to the hospital without an umbrella ! ” thought she, “ perhaps it is to the hospital of the Lunatic Asylum we are bound ; ” and the story heard in childhood, of the royal Bengal tiger diverted from his prey by the parasol of a lady, came afresh to her mind. They arrived at the outer court of the House of Industry, and Geraldine, who had been previously shown over the whole building by the devoted priest of the parish, was not a little relieved to find sister Placida directing her steps towards those who had retained their senses. On that day they were bound to the men’s wards, and on entering the first of them, sister Placida turned, and whispered, “ Sister, you are not to follow me, but to go regularly down the ward on your side, visiting every bed.”

Geraldine’s heart began to flutter !—uncurtained, and unemployed, lay a row of formidable looking beings, who would watch every movement, and listen to every word. She moved towards the first bed, on which appeared a head so extraordinary, that she doubted whether it were human ; an unshaved beard, and a fur cap drawn over the face of the sleeper, producing an effect far from encouraging ; and Geraldine being coward enough to rejoice that he slept, passed to the next bed, where lay a very old man. In her softest manner she inquired about his health, and listened to a voluble and detailed account of all his complaints, for they were many, and life hung by a slender thread. When, however, she proceeded to spiritual matters, his fluency was gone. He “ knew nothing of them things, they were not in his time.” Geraldine endeavoured to convince him, that to “ love and serve Almighty God in this world, that we might be happy with Him for ever in the next,” had been the great concern of every one when he was young, as well as in the present day.

“ Nuns and ladies did not go about in my time,” said he, “ I know nothing about them ”

But, my dear friend," said Geraldine. "you have heard of Almighty God?"

"No, indeed, He was not in my time," replied he; "I know nothing about Him."

"Then you must begin to try and know Him now," said Geraldine, much shocked.

"I'll tell you what," said he, "if you should be coming again, may be you'll bring me a little tobacco. It amuses me as I'm lying here!"

Geraldine promised the tobacco, and at that instant, the old man was seized with so violent and spasmodic a cough, that she feared he might die at once in his ignorance and unconcern. He revived, however, and seemed pleased that she had not left him. "You are very ill," said Geraldine, "and most probably will not live many days, perhaps not many hours, and where do you think you shall go when you die?"

"Why, you'll be a clever woman," said he, "if you can tell me that."

"If you will promise to do as I tell you," said Geraldine, "I will promise that you will go where you will be happier and better off, than you have ever been here:" and she began to teach him, in the simplest manner, the elements of religion; strongly suspecting, however, as she proceeded, that his ignorance was partly feigned, and thus it proved; so that, before she left him, her chief efforts were directed to convince him of his guilt, and move him to contrition for having denied his God. Careful not to weary him, however, she at length left him, having gained from him the promise, that till he saw one of the sisters again, he would, from time to time, repeat the words of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" endeavouring to enter into their contrite spirit; and also, to take a review of his past life, in distant preparation for confession.

In the next bed lay one who presented a striking contrast to the careless old man. He was a youth in the last stage of a decline, and whose heart and mind were already in "the better land." Geraldine, who possessed a keen perception of the spiritual progress of other minds, attempted not here to teach, but she was able to cheer and soothe, by sympathy with his holy thoughts, this dying saint.

Thus passed she on, with kind looks and soft words; suggesting thoughts of patience and of love for Jesus' sake, to those in

pain ; and was still absorbed in this employ, when sister Placida informed her they must depart. But on their way, they stopped at one of the wards, to see, according to promise, a poor man, who had, as sister Placida hoped, consented to an operation the day before.

“ How are you, Terence ? ”

“ Ah, lady ! so you are come. Praise be to God ! I have had my leg taken off. There were thirty surgeons round me, and I did not mind it a bit. All owing to you, lady, and your comforting words ; and, most of all, may God bless you for giving me this,” showing them a small brass crucifix. “ I held it, and looked at it all the time they were cutting through my flesh and bone ; and, as you told me, I joined my sufferings to *His* sufferings, and He gave me strength. I never uttered one cry, for I never lost the grasp of this—and here it is again. May the Lord bless you for the loan.”

“ You may keep it, Terence.”

“ Ah ! then I am a happy man. Praise be to God and to his blessed Mother, and may they receive you straight from earth to heaven. Angels that you are !—Glory be to his holy name ! ”

Sweet and calm is the holy silence of the convent after the fatigues of the duties without ; when the mind that has laboured, and the heart that has bled, for others, may enter its rest with God. The sisters are under the precious obligation, by their rule, to again visit the blessed sacrament on their return to the convent ; thank their Lord Jesus Christ for his protection ; humble themselves before him for any imperfections they may have fallen into ; and most earnestly pray, that whatever assistance has been afforded through his grace and mercy may conduce to his own glory, the salvation of their souls, and those whom they have instructed.

Welcome, also, in its due course, is the cheerful evening recreation, which in the order of Mercy the novices and postulants pass with the professed sisters in the community-room, where all are encouraged to be joyful, as a duty towards each other, and a tribute of gratitude due to God.

Geraldine was always willing to contribute her share to the general amusement, but her chief gratification was to be a listener to the various groups around her, especially when the occurrences of the day were being recounted by a certain young professed sister, who was the general prize at recreation both to young

and old, but of which she was perfectly unconscious, as well as of the reason why every one laughed at her adventures ; the simplicity of her character preventing the discovery.

"Reverend mother," cried a young novice, "do make sister Mary Lucy tell us why she is sad."

"Sad!" repeated the mother-superior, turning to look at sister Mary Lucy's sweet dimpled face, "I never saw any one less guilty of sadness."

"Oh, but she confesses, reverend mother, to being very near it," said the novice Mary Agnes.

"In that case," said the mother-superior, entering into the jest, "if you begin your confessions at recreation, sister Mary Lucy, you must finish them here."

"Ah! well, reverend mother dear, sure it is just nothing at all—it is only the old men and women."

"What of them—were they cross to-day?"

"They were a little cross, reverend mother."

"But you, a professed sister, would not think of minding that."

"No, indeed, reverend mother, I know that I ought to be glad to suffer, instead of having any reward here, and I should not think of the crossness, only of the troubles that come on me in consequence. I think," continued she, after a little pause, "I think the old women are crosser than the old men—perhaps they are cold—no, they cannot be cold this weather—perhaps it is too warm they are, poor old women. I had better not say they are cross, had I, reverend mother?"

"Ah! here is a regular scruple," cried the young Agnes.

"Ah! no, fie, sister dear, it is not a scruple; is it, reverend mother?"

"I cannot decide these knotty questions here," said the mother-superior, laughing. "Go on at once with your story."

"Well, I will, reverend mother. I said that the old men were not so very cross, but there was one old man outdid all the old women. I only asked him if it were long since he was at his duty, and he growled terribly at me, reverend mother. Indeed he did, though I looked very sweet and kind at him, poor old man. But, then, at last he became much more gentle and amiable, and he even promised me that he would see the priest. He was a sailor, and he said, 'Bless you, I have not been to my duty these fifteen years, but I'll overhaul my con-

science to please you, for, sure enough, the ship I was in was hell afloat."

"And how came you to be so successful with him; was it by your fervent prayers?"

"Ah! that is the very thing," sighed sister Mary Lucy; "sure, I think it was, perhaps, by no prayers at all, for I told him that when I next came I would bring him 'a dust of snuff,' and that warmed his cross heart, poor old man."

"Gently, gently," said the mistress of novices to her merry children, who had given a general shout.

"And you were feeling a little uncomfortable," said the superior, "because I have desired you to make no more promises at the hospital; well, cheer up, because for this time you are forgiven."

"Ah, reverend mother dear, there are more—"

"What, more promises?"

"Sure, there are the cross old women. That is, I mean, the sick old women."

"And the more cross they were, the more you promised them. Is that it?"

"They were very badly off for beads, reverend mother, and one old woman said she could read very well if she had a prayer-book and spectacles; and there were two who had no caps, and so I said we would see about it all."

"Is that the whole?"

"Not quite, reverend mother. Somehow or other, I promised three pair of spectacles, some tea, and a little more snuff, and that is really all."

"And how are you to get all these things, sister?"

"Ah, reverend mother dear, you will tell the sisters to be charitable when I go a begging to them."

"That may do very well for the caps, for I will desire sister Mary Josephine to give you some calico from the poor's store-room, but what are you to do for the other articles?"

"Reverend mother, I know of a shilling—really a whole hilling—may I have it?"

"How can you possibly have a shilling, sister Mary Lucy?"

"I have it not, reverend mother, but when I swept out the refectory since supper, I found a shilling on the floor, just where mother Burser sits."

"And why did you not take it to her?"

"Ah, no, reverend mother, I left it just where it was, because it seemed to be there on purpose for the old women, and I thought you would let me have it. May I fetch it?"

On receiving a nod of assent, away tripped sister Mary Lucy, and returned exultingly with the shilling; but her return was the signal for a general attack of—"Ah, sister dear, you would not be keeping all the shilling for yourself," and, "Ah, sister dear, if you had seen the misery I have witnessed to-day in the private visiting," &c., till in a few minutes the twelve pence, or rather the twenty-four half-pennies, were distributed by promise, and the poor owner exclaimed, "Sure, I have nothing left for myself and the old women!"

"Alas!" thought Geraldine, "how many shillings have I thrown away."

One of the novices was the heiress to great wealth gained in trade, and it was interesting to see the artless satisfaction she evinced when the final sentence being passed by the reverend mother, that only four of the "beggars" should share the shilling with sister Mary Lucy, she was allowed to retain her promised two-pence.

As soon as this affair was settled, Geraldine requested to have the question solved, which for her still remained an enigma, of sister Placida, and the umbrella: for she had been so much occupied by her own allotted employment, as not to have remembered anything else, during the time they were together in the hospital.

After much laughter, and an endeavour, on the part of the experienced, to puzzle our heroine still more, sister Placida was called upon to explain the difficulty, which, like many others, admitted of the simplest solution.

"Indeed, reverend mother," said sister Placida, "the umbrella is a great comfort to lean on, when standing so many hours, for at the hospital and infirmary, there are neither chairs nor stools."

"How did you manage, sister Mary Paula?" asked one of the novices.

"I either knelt," replied our heroine, "or sat on the edge of the bed, next to the one whereon was the object of my care. May I continue to do so, reverend mother?"

"You may," replied the superioress, "should the bed be vacant."

At this instant, a previous ring at the back gate of the convent

was explained, by the entrance of two lay sisters, with a large bale of goods for the poor, sent to the sisters of mercy for distribution ; and this welcome present being the first of a succession of contributions in money and in goods, which arrived from all parts of the city, from Protestants as well as from Catholics, as the cold season advanced, sister Mary Lucy was enabled to fulfil all her promises, and to make many more to her old men and women, whether cross or resigned.

CHAPTER XIX

Come while the blossoms of thy years are brightest,
Thou youthful wanderer in a flowery maze,
Come while the restless heart is bounding lightest,
And joy's pure sunbeams dazzle on thy ways.
Life has but shadows, save a promise given,
Which lights the future with a fadeless day ;
O touch the sceptre, win a hope in heaven,
Come, turn thy spirit from the world away.

Convent Invitation.

THE following day, as two of the sisters were returning from their round of visits, at the corner of the street which led to the convent, they were timidly accosted by a young person, who entreated them to listen to her.—The sisters motioned to her to follow them, but this she seemed unwilling to do, till, after some instants' thought, she again took courage, and overtook them just as the convent door was opened by the portress.

"Perhaps it is to our 'House of Mercy,' you want admittance, my dear?" said the sister, "the door is round the corner."

"No, ma'am," replied she, "I am not come on my own account, but at the request of my lady;" and she presented a note addressed to the 'Sisters of Mercy.' The young person was now requested to sit down, and the note being taken to the mother-superior, proved as follows:—"I know that your first duty is towards the poor; but in dwelling on your name, I feel if indeed you be sisters of mercy, the writer of this may claim your care, being poor and wretched in the sight of

heaven. I am told that you visit nowhere, without a note from one of the priests. I know none of the priests of this city ; but the confidential bearer of this has seen unexpectedly to-day an English priest, to whom I was once known. If you can find out the residence of the Rev. John Bernard, and mention to him my maiden name of Helena Brook, he will bid you come to me for mercy's sake."

"Return to the young person," said the mother-superior, to sister Agatha, "and tell her that the Rev. Mr Bernard shall be written to this evening, and that, with his sanction, two of the sisters will wait on her lady to-morrow. Fix the hour with the young person, and the precise address."

The Rev. Mr Bernard answered the mother-superior's note in person, and on the following afternoon, the two sisters appointed, namely sister Margaret, and our novice, Mary Paula, arrived at the place of their destination, which proved to be one of the handsomest houses in —. The young attendant was watching for them at one of the windows looking on the portico, and she admitted them softly into the entrance hall. The porter was, or feigned to be, asleep in his official chair, and no other male domestic appeared, as they followed their guide up two flights of stairs, to the front room of the second floor, which was fitted up in a style, which, in elegance and splendour, Geraldine had never seen surpassed, and which filled sister Margaret with pity and sorrow. "This reminds me," said the latter, as they were now left alone, "of what the apartments of Magdalen must have been, before her conversion. Rev. mother, however, has told us we may expect to find a true penitent, and may the Almighty's peace be with her."

Our heroine smiled at sister Margaret's ideas respecting the decoration of the apartments ; and having but a few months left the same assemblage of marbles, fresco walls, classical groups in alabaster and bronze, and the choicest ornamental specimens of mosaics, cameos, and lava, she thought, "how innocently might all these rare beauties have been collected ;" and feeling quite at home amongst them all, she turned to view the whole, when in a full-length mirror artfully disposed within a painted archway of trelliced work and flowers, our heroine for the first time beheld herself in the religious garb. "Oh ! Geraldine ! what sympathy have you, now, with works of art opposed to the service of the altar ? what are the false beauties of mythology, to one

who has entered the court of the King of kings, who has chosen to be an abject in the house of her Lord Jesus Christ!"

She remained fixedly gazing, while compunction filled her heart; the touching aspirations attached to each part of her consecrated habit rushed to her mind, and, sinking on her knees, she offered anew the whole of her being, with all her faculties and sensibilities, to her only true Joy. Sister Margaret, who, during the absence of the attendant, had remained with her eyes fixed on the carpet, now touched Geraldine on the arm, to give notice that they were sent for; and they followed the young person into the adjoining room, which was nearly similar in size and decoration. A bed with ormolu canopy, and curtains of amber silk, stood in the centre, towards which sister Margaret was approaching, when the attendant conducted them to the inner side of the room, where they found the object of their visit. She had insisted on being taken out of bed, and laid on a mattress on the floor, before the admission of the sisters: her long auburn hair had been hastily cut, and lay beside her, and her clasped hands concealed her face. The sisters knelt on each side of the sufferer, and the attendant left the room.

"Are the Sisters of Mercy alone with me?" at length said Lady Hartley.

"They are, my dear," said sister Margaret.

"My dear!" repeated Lady Hartley; and, uncovering her face, she smiled. It was a young and lovely face; yet, when the smile had passed, there appeared the traces of acute suffering. She gazed at each alternately. "Oh! you are really nuns," cried she; and then the tears rushing to her eyes, she threw her arms round sister Margaret's neck, and sobbed aloud; while sister Margaret, in a gentle voice, spoke peace and encouragement.

Suddenly Lady Hartley raised her head, and looked earnestly at her. "No! it cannot be! yet there is a likeness; and the voice—the accent—you surely are not Irish?"

"I am not," replied sister Margaret; "I am Scotch."

"Ah! speak on! speak on!" said Lady Hartley, laying her hand again on sister Margaret's shoulder; "those were happy days, when I listened to pious advice given in that tongue."

"And you will have happy days again, please God," said sister Margaret.

"Ah! no! you do not know all! How can I ever tell you
"I have to say?"

"But you shall not be pressed to tell us anything you do not like," said sister Margaret. "It does not belong to us to hear your confession, my poor child."

"But I wish to tell you all, or nearly all," said she, "for my heart is bursting; that was the reason I begged you to come to me: and the very sight of your coif has given me courage beyond my hopes."

"And, more than this," said sister Margaret, "Almighty God has graciously sent his strengthening grace, in token of having accepted the penitential spirit in which you now humble yourself in the sight of his poor servants."

"Oh! these are comforting words," said Lady Hartley, as sister Margaret replaced her on her pillow; "yet, when you are gone, I shall be as wretched as ever."

"No, you will not," replied the sister; "you will then continue to open your heart with simplicity and gratitude to the mercy of God."

Lady Hartley had continued to hold the hand of each sister; and she now said to sister Margaret, "I feel a ring on your finger, and by that token I know that you are professed. There is some motto engraved on it—what are the words?"

Sister Margaret replied—"It is the verse in abridgment of 'In all things I sought rest, and I shall abide in the inheritance of the Lord.'"

"In all things I, too, have sought rest," repeated Lady Hartley; "but, wretched creature that I am, I did not abide in the inheritance of the Lord. Listen now, dear sisters—I will tell you—yes! I have worn the religious garb—I have lain prostrate before the altar, and here I am, a broken-hearted cast-away! Oh! Sisters—Sisters of Mercy! have mercy on the victim of a lost vocation!"

Deeply affected, the sisters pressed the trembling hands they held, and sister Margaret replied—"May our Almighty and merciful God receive your tears; may He pardon you, and give you peace!"

'Alas!' cried Lady Hartley; "God never designed me for the world I have so blindly chosen; for I have not had strength of mind to keep the right path through the labyrinth of pleasure."

"There is no such path," observed sister Margaret.

"Ah! but there are many who have kept themselves from evil tongues and false hearts, while I have loved and trusted every

one, and have been led, as if in a dream, to throw away the little happiness I once possessed, and there is nothing left for my heart but to break."

"Ah, no! your poor heart shall not break, please God," said sister Margaret, "with earthly sorrow, but with contrition; and in that sense you know it is said, 'the broken and humble heart God will not despise.'"

"He must despise and reject mine," said Lady Hartley, despondingly, "for I have wilfully turned it from Him to his enemies. Yes! wilfully—for I knew my Lord's will, and did it not. I had reposed in the sweet refreshing shade of his enclosed garden, and left it for the glare and scorching heat of the plains. An accident drew me from the convent; and, once again in the world, I remained for the scandal of others, and the loss of my own soul."

"Mistrust not thus the tender mercy of your God," said sister Margaret; "are you not as the stray lamb, which the divine Shepherd bears gently back to his fold? Are not the angels rejoicing at this very hour in your repentance?"

"Your voice soothes me," said Lady Hartley, "and your blessed assurances revive for a few instants the feeling of devotion, but it lasts not: the elastic spring of hope is gone for ever; and in its place, a heavy immoveable weight of mingled guilt and pain weighs down my spirit. I can no longer love God as once I loved him. Gone! gone! innocence and joy, and peace, and hope, and faith, and love, all gone. Ah! do not speak to me," continued she, hurriedly, as sister Margaret bent over with fresh motives for comfort. "Let me first tell you—first show you something"—and she drew from beneath the pillow a thin silver case; it contained a letter, which, by its appearance, had been often opened and re-opened, and watered by the tears of its possessor. "Look at the address," said she, with nervous rapidity, "Look! it is to Helena Brook, but I never received this letter till all was over; and when I did receive it, I was afraid to open it, and I never broke the seal till I began to pine after my lost happiness; when my heart had begun to lose drop by drop all its warm blood, and to dwell with bitterness; when my husband called me a fool, and cursed the day he saw me; when, reproaching me for that to which he had led me, he had the cruelty to say, that 'a runaway nun had indeed better hide herself:' then I sank, both mind and body. They tell me that he was kind to

me after this, but I knew it not, and was many weeks a mother before I saw my precious baby. She was beautiful. I would look for hours in her clear blue eyes—I offered her up from this her earliest infancy to become the spouse of Jesus Christ—I put her under the special protection of his Blessed Mother—nothing coloured has ever touched her, and she has looked like a seraph in her spotless white. I have had other poor infants since, but they all died, either before, or directly after their birth ; and she, my chosen one, that was to plead to God for me, to atone for my infidelity—to rejoice my soul, and give new life within me, she—Oh ! my God, my God, she is an idiot !”*

A deep groan burst from Geraldine, her sympathy was too intense for utterance.

“Do not attempt to comfort me,” said Lady Hartley, to sister Margaret, “but read this letter ; I could repeat it to you, but, that often as it has been read, it fills me with the same emotion, as if six days, instead of six years, had passed since it was written, and you remind me so forcibly of the revered writer, that I must listen to it from your lips. Why do you hesitate ? Why does your face flush ?”

“It has passed,” said sister Margaret ; and taking the letter, she read as follows :—

“C—Convent, *May 10th*, 183— .

“MY DEAR CHILD,

“We have been anxiously expecting to hear that your return to us will not be again delayed, but that you will join us before the clothing of our two postulants ; that our dear Mary Agnes may not lose her rank amongst our novices. I have your first letter by my side, in which you pine after your convent duties and pleasures, and part of it I will transcribe as the touchstone of your present feelings. ‘My uncle and aunt are very kind to me ; so are all their friends and the servants, particularly the maid who waits on me till my sprain is cured. The house is beautiful, and full of pictures and statues, and every one seems to be smiling and talking all day long. I may do just as I like, but it is very strange that I am melancholy, with all this to make me happy. I believe it must be, that no one understands me, and I understand no one. I do not care for any thing that is talked about, and when re-

creation time comes (for I keep to our convent hours as much as possible) I am more inclined to cry than to laugh. You will say, that this is having very little courage, my dear mistress, but it does seem so very long to be absent from you and my religious sisters, and, above all, I feel the desolation of being no longer under the same roof with the adorable sacrament.' My dear child, I trust that you will soon re-assure my heart by a letter more in harmony with this sentiment than was your last, and will tell me that the day is fixed for your return to the holy happy life you were so grieved to leave. Come back to your once happy nest, my poor simple bird ; you are not formed for the world. You will only flutter and die in its baneful atmosphere. The very qualities which in the cloister would be nurtured without peril, would in the world prove your ruin. That flexible disposition, that soft confiding character, which, like wax, can be moulded according to the will of others, and which is the perfection of a religious, would in the world prove an imperfection, and expose you to perpetual vacillation and inconsistency of conduct, if not to actual transgression. Those talents, —above all, that decorative taste which has hitherto been sanctified by its dedication to the altar,—would in the world be turned to vanity, luxury and self-adornment." The writer then relates many little anecdotes of the noviceship, and conveys messages from its inmates, all indicative of the artless merriment as well as the piety of the novices, and thus continues : " Ah ! Mary Agnes, when is it that the heart is thus light ? Is it not, when having generously followed the call to the rough and narrow way, every flower is full of fragrance, every sunbeam full of joy. Return, then, and renew the joyous laugh which has so often made the noviceship ring, and was the true recreation of a heart at peace with God. Return, with your wonted zeal and enthusiasm to adorn the new altar in honour of St Joseph, which lady-abbess wishes to be fixed in the south dormitory, the care of which is to be given to *us*."

Under a fresh date, the letter is continued thus :

" MY UNHAPPY CHILD !

" How can I give utterance to the pang which your letter of this morning has given us, and which I perceive is blotted by your tears. Oh ! fly from the snare which besets you—flight is your only safety, my poor, weak, if

not guilty child. Alas ! there is one place in the choir, towards which my heart has inexpressibly yearned ; my hopes have hitherto filled it with the virgin form of my regained treasure. Eleven white veils are there before me ; beyond them is the altar—the tabernacle—the divinity contained in the adorable Host. Eleven ; and the twelfth is gone : and why ? is it to betray her Lord ? Are the thirty pieces of silver included in these earthly espousals ? I can write no more, but you will be remembered by all, in the holy sacrifice and communion, until we hear again.

MARY AGATHA, of the Cross.
Benedictine unworthy."

A deep pause succeeded the reading of this letter ; and then a shriek, wild, piercing, and unearthly, burst from the hapless being to whom it had been addressed. Sister Margaret bent over her, and whispered unheeded consolation ; at length Lady Hartley opened her eyes, and said, " I was called by Jesus Christ to the high privilege of being his spouse. Before his altar, in presence of the adorable sacrament of his love, I begged of his minister the holy habit of religion, and in my name was said ; ' The kingdom of this world and all the grandeur of the earth I despise, for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom I have seen, whom I have loved, in whom I have believed, and towards whom my heart inclineth.' Ah ! go, go,—leave me,—why did I send for you ? Why did you come ? No one can bring me help or comfort. I have left my God, and He now leaves me. Do not speak to me,—go, blessed women, go !—I beg, I entreat. What have I to do with you, or you with me,—leave me ! leave me ! "

" Hush," said sister Margaret, in a voice which though gentle, was full of authority ; " hush these emotions, and listen calmly, while in your name I say, ' O Jesus, for thy tender mercies' sake, and for thy bitter passion's sake, forgive and forget what I have been. Pity ! oh pity ! what I am,—satisfy for what I deserve, and supply what I desire. O dearest Saviour ! thou soughtest me when I fled from thee ; wilt thou reject me now that I seek thee ? "

Again did Lady Hartley throw her arms round sister Margaret's neck, and weep. " Ah ! " cried she, " repeat to me again that prayer." The sister did so, adding, " Who gave you the

thought to send for us? Was this not a sign that your blessed Saviour has sought you, and that on your seeking him, he will not 'reject' you? Ah! listen to His loving invitations, and not to the whisperings of the wily enemy, whose object is to dishearten you."

"But it is very disheartening," said Lady Hartley, "that God gives so much more grace to some persons than to others. I wonder why He did not give me sufficient to persevere in my vocation?"

"Had you been faithful to the degree of grace then vouchsafed you," said sister Margaret, "God would have bestowed more; but how can we dare to hope for a superabundant degree, to supply for our infidelity?"

"But," replied Lady Hartley, "of course He foreknew all that would happen to me, and therefore it was very cruel."

"You must reject those thoughts instantly," said sister Margaret. "The human mind is so limited, that when we would dive into the permission of evil, in the eternal counsels, we are lost. The wisest philosophers, the most profound divines, have been content to admire, in reverence and humility, the Almighty's decrees, to respect them with love, and to love them with respect, as impenetrable, incomprehensible. But this we do know, that he can bring good out of evil."

"Ah! I know very well," interrupted Lady Hartley, "that all must conduce to the honour and glory of God. Unfortunately, as I may say, I know my religion perfectly well. I know that He will, in the end, be as much glorified by my sinful life, as He would have been, had I advanced in perfection, for we cannot do Him either harm or good, and He knows how to over-rule evil for good; but that does not console me for having been permitted, from want of His grace, to fall by degrees, till now I must be a warning for every one, instead of an example, and must be content to know that every silly girl will be told the sad life, and pious end, of the unfortunate Lady Hartley."

"If they can with truth be told of your pious end," said sister Margaret, "it will make ample amends for any disedification you may have given them."

"But I do not wish to play the part of Magdalene," said Lady Hartley, the proud tears gushing from her eyes; "I did feel penitent when I sent for you, but now it is all gone, and while you were talking to me just now, and thinking me so hum-

ble and contrite, I was planning how I could have my beautiful hair made up into tresses, that would fix again on my head."

"And are you hoping to be at once free from distraction and temptation," said sister Margaret, "and to find no difficulty in returning to the narrow road? surely you will be more courageous. I should wish to leave you in more peace, and yet we cannot linger with you longer, than to allow me to say one more short and earnest prayer."

"Say that beautiful little one again," cried she, "I have it nearly by heart."

Sister Margaret did so, and although she could not reckon on the duration of Lady Hartley's feelings, yet it was consoling to see this ingenuous though vacillating creature once more in peace; and having with some difficulty obtained her promise that she would prepare for confession, they took their leave for that day, followed by her blessings.

"We are now going not to teach, but to be taught," whispered sister Margaret, when having quitted the lordly mansions of the great, they turned into one of their oft-trod alleys, and climbed up the stairs of a wretched tenement. On entering the room of the bedridden woman to whom sister Margaret referred, the former gave an exclamation of joy at seeing them.

"Ah! glory be to God. Alagh,* you are come, alagh!"

"How are you, Norry?"

"Very ill, alagh; glory be to God, who sends me what is best for me."

"Are you in pain, Norry?"

"I am, alagh. My sweet Jesus and his blessed mother comfort me. Praise be to him, for sending you to me this blessed day."

"Do you know, Norry, that Friday will be a great feast, the feast of St Francis?"

"Will it, alagh? Ah! glorious are the saints of God, and very glorious is the saint who received the marks of the precious wounds of his loving Saviour. His prayers must be always heard, alagh!"

"You can repeat many verses about St Francis receiving the stigmas, can you not, Norry? But you are very faint. Where is the pain?"

"Oh the heart,—the heart,—oh the heart, it is going en-

* Child.

tirely." Here she nearly fainted, but after a while revived, saying, "O sweet Jesus, thy heart was pierced with a lance; glory be to thee for letting me share some of thy pain. O the heart!"

"Almighty God gives you abundant grace, and you are faithful to it, Norry. It is therefore a sweet consolation to see you on your dying bed, soon to be with him whom your heart desires."

"I have not been faithful enough, alagh! but I trust he will receive me, and receive you, and receive all the faithful departed,—eternal rest give to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them, and may all be with him, and his blessed mother, and all his saints for ever. Amen."

"Were you able to go to confession and holy communion, the day you expected, Norry?"

"I was, glory be to my sweet Jesus, who is the bread of life."

"Do you sleep better than you did, Norry?"

"I do not, alagh. I cannot sleep at night. I am forced to think of his watching and agony in the garden, not to be complaining when I hear all the rest asleep through the night."

"And when you think of his sufferings, it seems very little you are bearing for him, does it not?"

"It does seem very little, alagh! And by uniting my pain and weariness to his, I am having my purgatory, which comforts me, for I may hope to be the sooner with him."

"And you have many calm and silent hours with him in the night, which you could not have by day, Norry."

"I have, alagh! I say my prayers and my rosary often in the night; but sometimes the head, the head, alagh, it aches, oh it aches! I can only think of his crown of thorns, and bear it for his sake, for then I cannot pray."

"And indeed you know, far better than I can tell you, Norry, that God would rather have that offering, than the longest prayers you could say. Do the Christian Brothers come to see you?"

"They do, thanks be to God, and to his blessed mother, and may the Christian Brothers receive the reward of their charity."

"We have brought you a wrapper, Norry, and some tea and sugar, and some of the sisters will call at the end of the week."

The next event of interest at this time, was the arrival of several sisters of the parent convent, on their way to —, where they were to establish a new foundation. They were headed by their venerable mother-superior, whom, as foundress of the order, our heroine had alone wished to see and know among the dwellers on earth, and in whom she found all her expectations realized. It was interesting to watch the greetings of those, who had once formed but one community, and still more interesting to behold their parting; some amongst them struggling to retain the freedom of heart once acquired.

On the evening of the departure of the sister guests, sister Margaret, whose warm heart had shared in the passing emotion of the visit, was called from the recreation to the room appropriated to the evening instruction of adults, and found two young persons closely enveloped in cloaks; one of them especially, presenting an appearance so unlike the general visitors at that hour, that sister Margaret concluded there was some wish for concealment, and led them into an adjoining little parlour, where, throwing aside her veil and hood, Lady Hartley seized the hand of the sister, and exclaimed,—“I am come to give you good news; I am resolved to go to confession, and to serve God in humble penance all the rest of my life: my faithful maid and friend wishes to be with me wherever I go: we have talked over a thousand plans—amongst them, to board at a convent. I should much prefer returning to my own dear convent at —, where, ill as I have acted, they would receive me; and where one heart, I know, has never totally renounced me,—I mean my former dear mistress, mother Agatha.”

“She does not cease to pray for you,” replied sister Margaret, “but it is not on this earth; mother Agatha Gordon died three years ago.”

“Died!” exclaimed Lady Hartley,—“she is dead!—you can have the cruelty to tell me this with that calm voice, when she was my friend.”

“And to me,” said sister Margaret, “not only a friend, but, by nature and religion, a sister.”

“Your sister!” echoed Lady Hartley.”

“She was my twin-sister,” said the religious, and was silent.

“But why do I feel more than you?” cried Lady Hartley, with a vehemence of remorse and sorrow, “but because your thoughts are constantly turned to that better land, where you

are to meet, and never—never hear the word farewell ;’ while I am tossed on this wicked world with every chance of shipwreck.”

“Chance !” said sister Margaret, “you have been too well taught to use that word. Almighty God has sent you many graces, and you have been unfaithful to them ; this only should cause sorrow. Still, in his mercy, He again invites you ; and all these favours are the more precious, because so unmerited. You are very right to think of the shelter of a convent, and of that convent in particular which nurtured you.”

“But she is dead,” said Lady Hartley, “who would have won me back to holiness and peace,—but you will correct me, I know, for indulging these human feelings ; and, indeed, had she lived, how could I, a mere boarder, expect to be with her as once I was ;—this might have fretted me. No ! I will endeavour to rise above these fond regrets, and will write to the present Lady Abbess, whoever she may be, and will show you my letter before it is sent. I trust no other plans will come into my head.”

“Should they do so, you must banish them as temptations,” said sister Margaret ; “supposing that your confessor’s advice be given, as you expect it will, for this arrangement.”

“So I will, if possible,” returned Lady Hartley ; “but still, if God does not send me sufficient grace, I cannot follow this plan, or do right in any way.”

“Very true,” replied sister Margaret ; “but remember, you must be faithful to the good inspirations He has now given you, and doubt not but that more grace will be granted you. God grants salvation to all those who contribute their own consent to the graces and favours He has prepared for them, and which He also offers and distributes ; and to those who accept the graces of penitence, faith, hope, and charity, He also gives the grace of final perseverance, and the glorious happiness of His eternal love.”

“I often wonder,” said Lady Hartley, sighing, “at the change in me from what I once was.”

“The sole cause of the decay and slackening of piety,” returned sister Margaret, “is in the creature’s own will ; God never abandons those whom He has once justified, unless they first abandon Him.”

“But perhaps He never justified me.”

"How can any baptized person say this," said sister Margaret; "were you not then restored to original justice, forfeited by our first parents?"

"Oh!" cried Lady Hartley, "if you are going back to my baptism, I cannot contradict you, of course; but I mean since then."

"What do you mean by 'since then?'" said sister Margaret; "when we fall from our renewed innocence, has not God graciously given us the means of regaining His favour in the tribunal of penance? and if you have not availed yourself of the means of reconciliation, on yourself rests all the responsibility. Humble yourself, then, for not having consented to the mercy of God. Our free will can accept or reject His free grace, and you have done the latter."

"But I will do so no more," exclaimed Lady Hartley; "I will finish my preparations for confession, and go to Father ———, without delay. Indeed, I should be quite afraid of seeing you again, until I had given you some proof of my sincerity. I will also write to the Lady Abbess. I will do all I can to merit the return of the grace I have rejected."

And with these resolutions, Lady Hartley departed. The following week she returned, radiant with joy. She had made a general confession—she had the full approval of her confessor to retire to her former convent—she bore in her hand a guarded, but kind reply from the Lady Abbess of the convent, who was the same she had known when a novice, inviting her to visit the convent previously to forming any plan for a longer residence; and, better than all, she had seen a reverend friend of Sir Thaddeus Hartley, who had given her every hope, that if she continued for some little time in a pious retirement, a reconciliation might be effected, as her husband was willing to believe that she had been guilty only of indiscretion. She told sister Margaret, that were it not for her maid's sake, who wished to take leave of her family, she would begin her journey on the following day.

It was about three weeks after this encouraging interview, that sister Margaret received, through her reverend mother, a letter from Lady Hartley, dated "Hôtel de Rivoli, Paris;" stating, that a few days after her visit to the convent of Mercy, an aunt of her husband had arrived; that as this was the first overture from that part of the family, she could not but receive

her guest with respect : that Mrs —— was then on her way to Naples ; and in order to convince the world that Lady Hartley had been misjudged, generously offered to introduce her anew into society ; also holding out to her the prospect of a reconciliation with her husband ; and that they were merely resting in the French capital for a few days longer.

It would not enter into the limits, or intention, of this volume, to pursue farther the career of Lady Hartley. Suffice it to say, that her husband, who had originally sought her for her innocent piety, and who would, doubtless, again have sought her in the retirement to which her repentance had nearly led her—refused any overture made through his gay relation, from the circle his wife had chosen ; and years dragged on, with this victim of an inconstant purpose, who, in rejecting the grace of penance, as she had done that of a vocation, lost by degrees the remembrance even of the pure and happy feelings given to the faithful soul ; and in the false and deadly pleasures of the world, proved that awful sentence, “ My spirit shall not always strive with man.”

CHAPTER XX.

Home of the virtuous, when in peace reposing,
The spirit dwells in scenes of cloudless bliss ;
Where life's sad anxious cares are daily closing,
Who would not early choose a lot like this ?

AMONGST her numerous sister-novices, Geraldine found exemplified the effects of the admirable instructions they received from the spiritual lectures and exhortations of mother Juliana. In one she observed the spirit of mortification most evidenced by her silence when reproved,—a silence, not of sullenness, but of modesty and humility ; and this on seemingly trifling occasions, when, had she not been habitually recollected on that point, she would have been thrown off her guard. In another, she remarked a still greater advance in humility ; which led her, whenever she had from carelessness deserved reproof, to own her fault with sorrow, and resume her cheerfulness, just as a simple affectionate mother would do, whose mother had forgiven it : and those ex-

amples were the more interesting and instructive, as they were given, not by two young creatures habituated to the restraints of their age, but by ladies who had lived some time in the world, and were mistresses of their time and actions. In all the novices, was marked the endeavour to guard those doors by which the interior life is molested ; no one relating, or willingly hearing, news of the world she had left ; and no one being occupied with any soul but her own ; each being responsible, under God, to her mistress alone ; and bound to give each other the edification only of silent example. Thus, in holy silence and peace, each soul was hidden with Christ ; or, as it is of novices we spoke, it was her prayer and aim to be thus hidden : for, as during the noviciate the greatest warfare takes place between nature and grace, so must there be in the novice far more variation of feeling observable than amongst the professed sisters, whose calm seemed imperturbable. Geraldine, however, whose interest in watching the varied operations of divine grace on different characters, was increased, by seeing in the professed sisters the result to which the same system led the most contrasted dispositions, found the natural faults of the novices as interesting as their good qualities. Our heroine was too much experienced to imagine that all warfare between nature and grace had ceased in the breasts of the professed sisters, but grace had gained the vantage-ground, and the attacks of the enemy were always repulsed. The sensibilities and little artifices of self-love—the desire that the poor should recognise, and feel grateful, to one's individual self—the wish to relate with credit to one's self, at the recreation, some interesting scene—chagrin at being no longer sent to the places where one had become so useful, and so popular,—all this had passed ; for the true spouse of Christ had long realized the truth, that “all that is not God is nothing !” and insensible to the popular voice of praise or blame, to the gratitude or ingratitude of the object relieved, to the interior satisfaction or difficulty experienced in the path of duty, walks simply with her God, disregarding everything that would lift the idol self on the altar raised in her heart to Him alone.

The community in which Geraldine was now placed was so numerous, and she was necessarily thrown so much more with the novices than with the professed sisters, that it was some time before she had distinguished the characteristics of more than three or four of the latter.

Sister Margaret she had directly loved, for her Scotch accent; and had marked, on several occasions, her national firmness of mind, and her still but deep religious affections. Sister Mary Lucy was soon investigated. Sister Placida and sister Josephine had amply repaid, in their well-regulated minds and hearts, every advance made towards a more intimate knowledge of their characters. Wherever our heroine turned, she met a mild, modest countenance; in some, great personal attractions, and in all the recollected religious look, which, in the consecrated spouse of Heaven, is the only true beauty. Amongst this sweet sisterhood there was but one striking exception, in a certain sister Ignatia, who seemed as if, like the scape-goat, she were destined to bear the sins of the whole community, and to be sent forth into the desert; not from any want of Christian love and compassion towards an object so inferior and afflicted, but from an aversion or incapacity on her own part to be blended in the harmony around her. This incapacity was certainly great, if not total, for sister Ignatia was very deaf, and subject to a nervous irritation and spasm, which made it almost an act of cruelty to address her: and Geraldine, who had occasionally attempted it, was additionally discouraged by the tones of her voice, which were harsh, abrupt, and incoherent; while she could learn nothing from her countenance, from which nature or malady had banished all expression beyond that of nervous terror. Our heroine, however, while pondering on the seeming inequality of God's gifts, continued to watch sister Ignatia with kind interest, doubting not to discover in time some glimpse of an interior, where rich indemnification would be found for external trial; "For," thought she, "this sister surely accepts her outward afflictions as intended to fence her within the hidden life, in which is found the only true happiness." But in vain did Geraldine endeavour to discover this interior; the outworks were inaccessible; therefore her interest at length subsided into the willing hope, that this sister was a loving bearer of her cross; a hope which was the more fervent, from the contrast presented in sister Mary Gabrielle, her cousin, who had entered the convent as postulant at the same time with sister Ignatia, and had been clothed, and professed with her.

Sister Gabrielle in her white veil had looked like a seraph; and now that six years had seen her in the holy badge of her vows, if she were less brilliant she was not the less lovely. Her

countenance bore the same open innocent look which was so engaging in sister Mary Lucy, but the expression was of a higher order of intellect, and the affectionate playfulness of her manner was the unbending of a superior mind. The bountiful giver of all things had endowed her with a rare facility in acquirement, and she gratefully acknowledged the Almighty donor in every rich and varied gift. At the time of Geraldine's arrival, sister Mary Gabrielle was sacristan, and our heroine, from her place in the choir, was often an unseen and sympathizing witness of the holy joy and emotion which filled her heart when occupied in the care of the chapel and altar. Sister Gabrielle was also the organist, and regulator of the choir, which was admirably arranged: she gave the vocal instructions to the novices, and when any one was deputed to take the instrumental part, she led the voices with a pathos and devotion, which drew the ready tears to the eyes of Geraldine. Nor was it only within the walls of the enclosure that sister Gabrielle was the joy of her community: her labours amongst the poor, whether in the public institutions, in the private dwellings, in the school, or House of Mercy, were subjects of wonder and edification, even amongst the devoted sisterhood around her: and the simplicity with which the most painful and heroic acts of mercy and charity were performed, forbade the suspicion that in these good works self-love was suffered to bear sway.

Geraldine had been desired one evening by the mother-superior to go to her room immediately after matins, and to remain behind the high screen until she should join her. These little invitations were always acceptable to Geraldine, and keeping from the draughts of air exactly as she had been directed, she seated herself, and had not waited many minutes before the door opened, and she heard the whispered voice of the mother-superior, accompanied by that of sister Gabrielle.

"Ah, dearest sister," said the former, "you well know how I love you; be satisfied without these tender assurances; we are not two little novices, who must pet and be petted."

"You are allowed, as my mother, nay, you are obliged to love me," said sister Gabrielle, "for am I not your own dear child?"

"You are my own dear, precious child, and sister, and friend. There, now go."

"Give me your blessing."

"Ah, I am always blessing you, and praying for you, when I had far better be praying for my poor self."

"But you must bless me now, dear reverend mother."

"Almighty God bless you now and for ever," at length said the mother-superior, and the friends parted, sister Gabrielle descending to her duties in the sacristy, and the mother-superior entering within the screen, perceived our heroine, whom she had forgotten.

"I have coughed, and moved your chair, and given all honourable notice that I was here, reverend mother," said Geraldine, "but I am happy that you forgot me. I love to listen to friendship such as yours."

"We pray and make every effort that our friendship may be purely in and for God," said the mother-superior; "and I do not fear for sister Gabrielle, but I do fear my own weak heart, so apt to love the creature apart from the Creator."

"Indeed, reverend mother," said Geraldine, "I should judge otherwise, for sister Mary Gabrielle permits herself many more demonstrations of affection than you do."

"But so long as I shall hold my present office," said the mother-superior, "she may lawfully do so, for it is to the superior she gives her love and confidence as a dutiful child."

"And may you not equally love this dutiful child?"

"I may, nay, I must; but I must equally love all my children; and, in truth, I do love them all, and am permitted, as their mother in religion, to express this affection more than if I were simply one of the sisters. Still I make no distinctions, and I desire to feel none, and pray that I may love God alone, directly, and all creatures indirectly, through Him. This is not to be effected without constant prayer."

"To me," said Geraldine, "your friendship is so edifying, that I grieve it should cost your heart a pang. I well know that in the religious life particular friendships are not permitted; but this is to be understood as an exclusive attachment, that would endanger charity and sisterly union with the rest of the community: now I have watched you at recreation, and have never seen you attach yourself to any one in particular. You make yourself universal; and I think no one could discover whether sister Gabrielle or sister Ignatia were the chosen friend."

"Poor sister Ignatia!" said the mother-superior; "her suffer-

ings have continued through life only to increase, and she bears them like a saint. She was to have brought a considerable portion with her to the convent, and was at length indebted to sister Mary Gabrielle, her distant cousin, for admittance as a choir sister. She was then possessed of several very useful acquirements ; had a pleasing person, with but little of the nervous affection now so habitual ; was remarkably quick and clever in every office assigned her ; and in five years has become the distressing object you behold ! Never has a murmur passed her lips, though the interior conflicts she has undergone have been a martyrdom. You see her now, apparently cold and insensible : she was once a volcano beneath the snows ! but, thank God, the victory is hers. You have taken an interest in her, sister Mary Paula, which has not escaped me."

"I am just considering," said Geraldine, "in which the grace of God is the most manifested, and Himself the most glorified : whether by the patient suffering of sister Ignatia, or by the rich and abundant gifts of sister Gabrielle ? Without doubt I should pronounce in favour of the former, were there a shade of self-complacency discoverable in the latter ; but it is, indeed, a lovely sight, to behold sister Gabrielle, as a little child in humility and confiding affection, in the midst of her sisters. Her own heart incapable of jealousy, she never imagines that such a feeling can exist in that of others."

"Nor does it exist, thanks be to God, in our community," said the mother-superior. "All we receive from our bountiful Giver is for the sisterhood. She who brings much, and she who brings little, having a willing heart, are equally accepted ; for that which in temporal goods is regulated by the vow of poverty, is in spiritual and intellectual gifts equally regulated by the heart's desire of humility."

The bell now rang for supper ; and Geraldine followed to the choir, and thence to the refectory, trying to banish as a distraction her comparison of the two religious sisters, who had formed the subject of her conversation. She continued to meditate, however, on these two states of spiritual prosperity and adversity, for it was in that light she principally viewed them ; and at length decided, after some days of observation and deliberation, that the grace of God being the most conspicuous in the lovely humility of sister Gabrielle, He must thereby receive the most glory, and the sisters the most edification. Yet she could not but think

that the most glorious reward was prepared for her who had shared the most in the sufferings of her divine spouse. "Sister Gabrielle," thought she, "through His grace, dies to the world; but sister Ignatia is crucified to it."

CHAPTER XXI.

Weep not for the saints who ascend
To partake of the joys of the sky ;
Weep not for the seraphs, who bend
With the worshipping chorus on high ;
Weep not for the spirits, now crown'd
With the garland to martyrdom given ;—
Oh ! weep not for them—they have found
Their reward and their refuge in Heaven !

The Sacred Harp.

"I CANNOT feel so perfectly at peace, reverend mother, as you exhort me ever to be," said our heroine one afternoon, during recreation, when the former had taken her aside to give her a little remonstrance for over-grave looks. "I am, thanks be to God, without interior or exterior trial; but I cannot disengage my heart from all sympathy with yours, and I see there is some unusual care pressing on it."

"Ah! do not watch me so closely," said the mother-superior, smiling. "Mere trifles can press upon an unfaithful heart."

"No," said Geraldine, "trifles have no power over you; and why will you not confide in me? Must I think, dear reverend mother, that you repent of the precious hours we have passed together, and wish me, when alone with you, to be as ceremoniously the 'novice' with 'her mother-superior,' as when with the community?"

"Never can I wish that," replied the mother-superior; "for it is I who must then feel the privileged person. Believe me, sister Mary Paula, I find comfort, real comfort, in the time we pass together; and I fear not to intrust to you, as you request it, the cause of my anxiety, or, as I ought to feel it, rather that of greater reliance on Divine Providence. A Sister of Mercy must not be so wanting in faith, as to be anxious. The same God who guards us when we leave the enclosure, and causes

our safe return, will protect us when danger is within our walls ; or, if he permit our mortal part to sink in His service, will mercifully receive our souls.—Two of the sisters have caught the fever."

" You mean the typhus fever?"

" I do. Sister Placida and sister Gabrielle are now in the infirmary ; and the door which opens from that corridor into the dormitories, will be kept locked. Mother Juliana will give you all other instructions, as she will receive directions this evening."

" I trust, reverend mother, you will permit me to nurse the sisters," cried Geraldine, eagerly. " Let me entreat this favour of you."

" If the infirmarian wishes for your services, sister Mary Paula, she will apply to your mistress," replied the mother-superior.

" I stand rebuke," said our heroine. " ' Desire nothing, refuse nothing ! ' how easy has that appeared till now."

They now returned to the rest of the community ; but had not remained many minutes amongst the cheerful groups, when the five minutes' warning rang before vespers. Instantly all dispersed, in search of work to be deposited on the long tables in the community room and noviceship, in readiness for the lecture immediately after compline ; and Geraldine hastened with the rest to the duty of the hour.

At night prayers, the novice whose stall was behind hers, was missing. The following morning, at prime, mother Juliana led a young postulant from the choir to the infirmary ; and before the evening, it was ascertained that six of the community, including sister Ignatia, had caught the malady. The two infirmarians, and a lay sister, with the mother-superior, were their constant and only assistants. Day after day Geraldine expected, in vain, to be sent for ; and she found it difficult not to wish that she might have received the edification which she felt was given by the sick nuns and their tender nurses.

She had, however, the comfort to receive a precious little note from the mother-superior, giving good tidings of sister Placida and the young postulant : the others continued much as they had been the preceding day, with the exception of sister Gabrielle, who was worse ; and the prayers of the community continued for her with increased fervour.

Three days and nights had now passed since the state of sister

Mary Gabrielle had been pronounced alarming, then hopeless; and it was after the last choir office, on this third day, that Geraldine retired to her cell, hoping that she might at length receive a summons to the infirmary. She dwelt in pensive thought on the long and tender friendship which had subsisted between the dying nun and her mother-superior, untarnished by even a passing estrangement. The highly gifted subject had loved the sweet vassalage of obedience; to her, for Jesus' sake, the yoke had been easy, and the burden light; and to her youthful mother had she yielded, as unto Him. This unvarying conduct, while it edified the sisterhood, was received with simplicity by the mother-superior, as due to the office she held, and not to their previous friendship, which on both sides had been more and more purified from the mere sensible gratification of natural congeniality and affection, as each year saw them more disengaged from all that was not in God.

While Geraldine sat awaiting the hoped-for summons from the infirmary, she heard an unusual passing and repassing along the dormitory; but so softly did the sisters tread, that had not the pannel of her cell-door been open, she could not have heard them. At length the latch was lifted, and she opened the door to mother Juliana. She held on her arm Geraldine's white cloak, which she made a sign for her to put on, and gave her a taper, saying, "When you shall hear the first toll of the bell, sister Mary Paula, come to the noviceship, that you may light your taper, and arrange in time for the procession to the infirmary."

"Sister Mary Gabrielle is then dying?" whispered Geraldine.

"She is," replied mother Juliana; "and is expecting to receive the holy Viaticum:" saying this, she passed on to the next cell; and after a few minutes, the heavy swing and toll of the great bell gave the summons to the chamber of death.

Geraldine found the band of novices awaiting the signal for the procession to advance; and, lighting her taper, she placed herself in the ranks. The professed and lay sisters now assembled at the end of the great corridor, and, immediately the latter had passed in order, the novices followed. Geraldine cast a glance along the row of professed sisters, as they stood to let the novices advance, and caught the heaven-born expression of her who walked the last in the procession. To the marble paleness which had been the consequence of sorrow and fatigue, had now suc-

ceeded a deep flush ; and the aid she was beseeching from heaven shone in her uplifted eyes, and in the almost smile of her parted lips.

Arrived in the infirmary, the sisters ranged themselves on each side of the room, as when in choir ; and the dying nun smiled, as she once more saw herself surrounded by her religious sisters, in this last, and to her happy, hour.

The solemn rite proceeded : the spouse of Christ received in pledge her hidden Lord, who would, ere another dawn, receive her into His full and glorious presence. After a pause, during which many a silent prayer ascended to heaven, the community arose, and prepared to depart, in the same order in which they came ; and the lay sisters had already left the corridor, when a signal given arrested them : for one watchful eye had caught the last look—one watchful ear had caught the last sigh ; and a whispered message brought back the sisterhood, to chant the litanies for the departed soul.

At length the room was left by all, save the mother-superior and the infirmarian, who, rising from their knees, performed the last sad duties to their religious sister. The eyes and mouth were closed by the former : to her was yielded the washing of the face, the hands, the feet ; and after this began the joint office of clothing, in the full habit of the order, the lifeless form. Ah ! who can tell the tender yearnings of the bereaved heart of the superior, as she drew each part of the habit over the dead limbs, and arranged the veil, the cincture, and the beads ? The friends had, indeed, been lovely in their lives, but in their deaths were divided ; and nature for a while refused to accept consolation from that unseen and wholly spiritual communion held with those departed. It was also the superior's solemn office to place in the joined and stiffening hands those vows which were the judgment of her loved friend ! Seven years had passed since Caroline O'Mara, called in religion sister Mary Gabrielle, had pronounced the vows ; and the document had been then consigned to the mother-superior, never to be touched or seen again till death.

As soon as it was known, on the following morning, throughout the enclosure, that sister Mary Gabrielle was no more, the lamentations were universal. The lay sister who had the principal charge of the House of Mercy was unable to conceal her grief from its inmates ; and a burst of sorrow arose, which was heard in, and echoed from, the poor-school, where the sad

news had been already whispered from one child to another. Sympathy and condolence were sincerely felt by all attached to the order of Mercy, and especially by the Ursuline community, where sister Mary Gabrielle had been a pensioner, and where her budding virtues had been nourished and trained to a blessed maturity.

Geraldine had been admitted to watch and pray with a professed sister an allotted half hour by the side of the departed nun. This was not the first time she had looked on death; but it was the first time she had watched, in the silence of night, by one departed, since the farewell she had taken of the earthly remains of De Grey. The present scene was calculated to recall, without any fond human feeling, that hour of widowhood. "What," thought she, as she gazed on the beautiful features, and the almost awful expression of the countenance before her, once so sweetly mild and playful,—“what are the ties of earth, when this, the purest, truest, best of religious sisterhood, is, in its human part, susceptible of grief! Little avails it now to sister Gabrielle that she was the joy of her community, a living spring, bidding all hearts be full at her approach of innocent and holy mirth. That she could weep, too, with those who wept, and pour the balm of tender sympathy into their wounds; that she could reprove the sinner, instruct the ignorant, console the captive; for in doing all this, from the effusion of an ardent and tender nature, she had on earth her reward. But greatly does it avail thee, blessed sister,” continued Geraldine, “to have done all this for His dear sake, who was thy sole aim and hope, and who is now thy joy and thy glory.”

So entirely had Geraldine's thoughts been occupied by the death of this “loved, and lovely one,” that it was with a pang of self-reproach she heard announced on the following day, that sister Ignatia was no more! The community had attended the administration of the last sacrament to this sister, as on the former solemn occasion, but our heroine had been sent with another sister, to some distant sick calls, before the notice given from the infirmary.

The sisters assembled at the usual hour in the community-room, and spoke, with their wonted sweetness and charity, of this last departed sister. They praised her humility, her patience, and each endeavoured to recollect something to her advantage. Still they had suffered no bereavement, they felt no sorrow.

Each had fulfilled her duty towards the deceased, and had no "compunctious visitings." The sufferer had gone to her reward,—they rejoiced in her gain,—very soon the conversation returned to sister Gabrielle, and even in death sister Ignatia was forgotten! With a sigh our heroine admitted that it could not be otherwise, for one sister had been everything, the other nothing, to her community.

After matins, Geraldine was visited in her cell by the mother-superior, and invited to the chamber of death. The plain and almost vacant countenance of sister Ignatia, now wore an expression, which, during our heroine's experience, had never appeared, and the real form was now distinguished of the hitherto heated and swollen features. There was something in the sight of this lonely creature, which melted the tender heart of Geraldine; and truly, as she rejoiced to think that she was now in the full company of those, who, if suffering, would sympathize with her, she could not forbear weeping at the remembrance of her solitary life on earth. She recalled the times when some passing expression on that poor disfigured countenance, had given her an idea that the sister's deafness was not constant, and varied with the state of her nerves. How often must she have been unintentionally wounded? And had she always accepted these wounds in the pure meek spirit of perfect love? Was the sacrifice complete, and might she hope that no more of purgatorial process would be requisite? While thus our heroine thought and prayed, she perceived the superior, who had been kneeling a little apart in fervent prayer, suddenly fall prostrate on the floor; and alarmed by an immediate rush of painful conjectures, Geraldine moved towards her, but in an instant saw her raise herself on her knees, her countenance radiant with joy, exclaiming, in loud and exulting tones, "*Te Deum laudamus, Te Dominum confitemur*," motioning to Geraldine to unite with her in the song of thanksgiving. Our heroine did so, repeating the alternate verses, at first from blind obedience; but the cause was soon made evident to her, and her voice became likewise full of animated fervour. During these last afflictions, incense had been used, especially after death had taken place, as a proper precaution against the malady, for the survivors. The usual incense was burning in the room where sister Ignatia lay, when Geraldine entered, and although aware that something strange was now taking place around her, she scarcely dared trust the

evidence of her senses, but looked into the cup where the incense had been burning, and found it totally consumed, while a fragrance far beyond anything she had ever known, continued to arise, in fresh clouds of the most exquisite fragrance; and Geraldine recognised, with trembling awe and gratitude, that she was near one who had died in the odour of sanctity! Yes! the plain, the awkward, the repulsive sister Ignatia, who had on earth suffered a living martyrdom, known only to her God, had so faithfully corresponded to the graces vouchsafed her soul, had so perfected the holocaust, that the purifying fire having already consumed all that was not of pure gold, she had at once entered into the joy of her Lord.

After some time spent in this now sanctified apartment, the mother-superior withdrew, to write to the bishop, requesting to know his wishes respecting the omission of the usual prayers for the faithful departed, and Geraldine remained alone with the body of the saint. Tremblingly she approached it, and bathed the feet with her tears. "I will not mourn," cried she, "that thou wert so little known. I will not even mourn, that perchance my looks or words might have added to thy sufferings, since every pang was but given thee for thy present glory. Ah! happy obscurity, in which thou wert crucified with Jesus thy Lord. If thou hadst had one earthly friend; if one mortal had but loved thee; perhaps thou wouldst have lost thy crown. Ah! sainted sister, in thy glorious home, remember one who has been but too much loved. Beg of our divine Spouse to give me but himself, his love, his grace. I desire henceforth no more!"

The bishop was absent on a journey to a remote part of the diocese, and no answer to the mother-superior's letter, could arrive before the interment. Every form was therefore observed exactly as had been with the remains of sister Mary Gabrielle. After all the procession had quitted the vault, except the mother-superior, and the mother-assistant, who walked last, the same fragrance arose, and they both returned to render thanks for the favour vouchsafed them. The rest of the community were left to form their own opinion of the circumstance, as related to them, and to receive whatever impression would the most tend to improve and comfort them. Some attributed the unusual fragrance to arise from some ingredient not before mixed with the incense, and that our heroine was mistaken in supposing the fire extinguished, and many, impossible solutions were given by others,

before the simple easy truth was admitted, that a supernatural odour had surrounded the corpse of sister Ignatia. God thus giving her honour amongst those with whom she had lived unknown, being hidden with Him.

Geraldine now pondered more than ever over everything she could recall of this departed sister; but as might be supposed, she could fix on nothing remarkable. Sister Ignatia had observed her holy rule with undeviating fidelity, but had done nothing more. Nothing more therefore was required to form a saint. The observance of her rule also had been in simple conformity to the will of God, as shown her by her superiors. There were days, weeks, and at one period months, when from the rush of blood to the head, she was incapable of any duty whatever, except that of resignation. And in this, was she exercised sorely. Not only were the avenues of sight and sound barred up at those attacks in the head, but interior conflicts the most acute took place, rendering her a seeming outcast from God and man,—conflicts, not such as Geraldine had known, of a few months only, but lasting, with but few intervals, during five years of her religious life, and terminating only with her death. To the mother-superior, who had been, as far as duty recommended, in her confidence, Geraldine applied, to be satisfied that sister Ignatia had really received a call from God to the religious life, “for,” said she, “the account you have given me of her powers and appearance, when she entered the convent, had given me the idea that anguish of mind, at having taken an inconsiderate, but irrevocable step, had been the gnawing worm at the root of that fair tree.”

“No,” replied the superior, “sister Mary Ignatia was ever fully convinced she was called to the religious life; that, in it alone, she individually could find salvation: thus, amongst her many trials, the doubt of her vocation never was added. Like yourself, sister Mary Paula, my mind has been filled with thoughts of this departed sister; the more so, that her career and destiny were so closely linked with that other sister so dear to us all, our own Mary Gabrielle.”

“Yes!” said Geraldine, “I was much struck when mother-assistant told me that these two sisters had been admitted, clothed, professed, and now are gone to heaven together.”

“I trust they are together,” added the mother-superior, “for it is their dying within a few hours of each other, and especially

sister Ignatia's following sister Gabrielle, that has impressed my mind, and will impress yours, when I shall have told you their relative history. This I am now enabled to do, by the permission granted to father Malone, by sister Ignatia, to reveal any part of her spiritual history which he may deem likely to benefit others. At the time of sister Mary Gabrielle's first application for admittance, we were quite unacquainted with Miss Bertram, her distant cousin. Several months elapsed, before sister Gabrielle, then Caroline O'Mara, definitively signified her choice of this convent of the order, and was accepted. The following day, Miss Bertram called; had a long interview with mother-assistant, who was then superior, and was admitted, as you are aware, on the same day, to the surprise and joy of Miss O'Mara. Little did we then suspect the voluntary martyrdom of Miss Bertram. In the world, they had, from family connexion, been playmates, then sister-pensioners at an Ursuline convent, and, on their entrance into the world, were friends, and thus continued. Such a being, as our sister Mary Gabrielle, could not but have been loved, cherished, and admired in the world, but she had early given her heart to God, and so truly had she given it, that she would not return to the convent which had reared her, being aware, that to this particular institute she was called. She had, however, balanced some time before she could renounce her loved Ursulines, and Miss Bertram, without betraying her own secret, awaited her decision. This sacrifice of a beloved community in favour of another convent, was perhaps the only conflict which the peaceful heart of sister Gabrielle ever knew; for in wonderful variety does Almighty God attune his human instruments, to form the general harmony."

The substance of the wished-for history was as follows:—

From her earliest childhood, the love and approbation of those she herself esteemed, had been the bane of Harriet Bertram's spiritual progress, and, as if to punish her for this want of simplicity in the service of God, or as a means to draw her towards it,—probably both,—wherever she went, whatever she undertook, she found her cousin Caroline associated with her, to gain all hearts, and inspire all with the respect which even a child may claim in its simple choice of virtue. That which to Harriet Bertram was the result of a long contested struggle between the superior and inferior parts of the soul, seemed the gentle necessity of a pure will in Caroline O'Mara. In the latter was gener-

osity, in the former magnanimity. One event followed another, to gladden the heart of one, and pierce that of the other, till at length a jealousy, which arose to a passion, and led to the mortal sin of envy, took possession of the unhappy Harriet. To be emancipated from the constant intercourse with this favourite of heaven and earth, who had drawn from her all hearts, and obscured all her talents and good deeds, was the only aim and hope which gave her peace ; and every effort was exerted to bring about this desired event, for she had, at length, owned to herself, or rather listened to the suggestion of the enemy, that heaven itself would not be bliss, if Caroline O'Mara were in the same mansion of glory with herself.

One night Harriet Bertram was alone, in a state of mind exceeding all that she had ever before felt : her heart throbbed with agony, and the pulses of her head seemed to urge the brain to madness. Again, and this time, in the one only choice of her life, had Caroline O'Mara crossed her path, to render it desolate and dark for ever. Awful flittings of each deadly feeling passed and repassed ; each time assuming forms more distinct, and her soul was beckoned onwards to the verge of hatred and despair. Well she knew that the betrayal of her jealousy had caused the transfer of the heart she prized to the unconscious Caroline—unconscious now no longer. And what had been her part ? The discovery that she had marred the happiness of her friend, had only hastened the long meditated step of retirement from the world, and too late was Harriet to be freed from that thralldom of superior merit, under which she had struggled and writhed in vain.

She threw open her window, which, from an eminence in the vicinity of London, looked over that world of interest, of joys, of sorrows, of passions, and of crimes. From that distance all lay apparently hushed in midnight repose ; the countless rows of twinkling lights seemed but in homage to the sleeping millions ; and thus also in outward calm stood she who bore within her breast an epitome of that vast city. She saw not the scene which lay before her, for it was the midnight breeze she had alone sought, and it fanned her pallid cheek, and raised from it the ringlets, which in that one night had turned to grey. And now she sprang suddenly from the window, and cast herself on the ground. Three hours did she lie prostrate and immoveable ; but not a sense, not a nerve was slumbering—and at length she

arose—the dawn of a new day faintly appeared in the eastern horizon, and the dawn of a new era to this child of storms. A resolution had been struggled for and taken, which but for the issue, which proclaimed it to be acceptable to God, must have seemed too daring. “Yes!” cried she, “I will follow her who eclipses me. I will live and die in her shadow. I will stifle this jealousy by every tie, every bond that can destroy it. I will love her whom I now hate. Henceforth I defy ye, spirits of hell, for I can do all things through Him who strengthens me, and Him only will I serve.”

We read of instances of a total change of character, from a new and expulsive influence given to the mind. Amongst others, of a spendthrift,* who, from beholding from an eminence the patrimony then lost to him, became from that hour a resolute miser, and at length regained his lost estate: and thus for a heavenly inheritance, did the vigorous mind of Harriet Bertram conceive and execute a design of far more meritorious daring. Jealousy is the passion of obtaining and possessing, to the exclusion of another, something that is not God. Envy of another's spiritual good does not result from a desire to be loved by God, but by his creatures, as being a favourite of God. It is jealousy, containing deceit and pride, and is therefore deadly. The soul which has truly entered into the pure love of God, can be tarnished neither by jealousy nor envy, because she is then made aware of the plenitude of God's love, which is sufficient for all creatures. One soul cannot encroach upon and disturb another in that boundless ocean. Harriet Bertram thus reasoned: and instead of attempting to conquer her jealousy by dwelling on, and investigating her vexed and irritable feelings, she, as it were, left them, as unworthy of her notice, to starve and die, while she bent the whole force of her powerful mind and heart to the high aim of loving God alone. In this her ardent prayer and endeavour, she found an unexpected obstacle in the great happiness she enjoyed in her new life, where, unlike the idle confusion of the world, each sister had her allotted occupations in silence and peace: and Harriet, now sister Mary Ignatia, was as useful, as much respected, and as much trusted, as that bright star which had hitherto extinguished her lesser light. Thus, for the first time in her life, was she in calm prosperity. She found no difficulty in the convent observances, was blessed

* Foster's “Essay on Decision of Character.”

with perfect health, and was in charity, nay, more than charity, with all her religious sisters, and began to love her present life for the peace and happiness it gave her ; in fine, she loved it as her end, not as a means to conduct her to that end which is God. And so skilfully did the enemy conceal her danger from her, so artfully did he make her believe that in entering into religion the great work of her salvation was effected, that during nearly three years she was a model of piety and observance of her rule, without the purity of motive, which alone could avail her : the approbation of her religious sisters, and the pleasure of being with them, and like them, being, as she afterwards discovered, the sole springs of her zeal.

But God did not leave the soul which had once generously given herself to Him, to be cheated from His service by the wily arts of Satan. By degrees, every thing which had detained her on the surface of the spiritual life was withdrawn, and, for the safe keeping of her soul, and because humility is best taught by humiliation, it was permitted that she should fall into several mistakes and faults in the discharge of her external duties, and even be apparently guilty of neglect, involving so much inconvenience and disedification, that she forfeited much of the confidence reposed in her.

This trial was followed by nervous attacks ; at first, slight ; which terminated in a continued affection of one side of her person, and reacted on the mind, whence they originated ; not destroying its powers, but the manifestation of them ; manner, voice, and hearing, becoming confused ; and causing her fully to experience the situation of the humbled religious,—“ That which is pleasing to others shall go forward, that which thou wouldst have shall not succeed.”

“ That which others say shall be hearkened to ; what thou sayest shall not be regarded.”

“ Others shall ask, and shall receive ; thou shalt ask, and not obtain.”

“ Others shall be great in the esteem of men, but of thee no notice shall be taken.”

“ To others, this or that shall be committed, but thou shalt be accounted fit for nothing.”

At this, nature will, and in sister Ignatia's case, did repine ; and it was not till after many struggles, that she could even bear it in silence ; for the mental storms were terrific ; and not only

did she rebel against the seeming accidents, and misunderstandings, which had deprived her of the confidence of the community, but she also felt bitterly the loss of her quick and skilful habits, and the helpless state of her person.

But, as in that turning point of her life, when she determined to live in the shade of another's excellence, she well knew that of herself the task was impossible,—but, through the grace of God, success was not only possible, but certain ;—so now, after a conflict full as severe, did she resolve to love, not only inferiority, but contempt.

Sister Ignatia was at this time no novice in the theory of the religious life. She had been a professed nun three years ; and all that could be written or said on the subject of humility, mortification, and conformity to the will of God, was familiar to her understanding. She well knew, that when her heart also could accept and embrace humiliation and contempt, she should enter into the true liberty of the spirit ; but, as the process had been gradual, which had enclosed her soul from the religious community around her, keeping her sequestered from those hitherto so dear to her ; so was the process gradual by which that soul was settled in tranquillity.

Two years had passed since sister Ignatia, deprived of every employment, and become a pitiable object, from corporal disease, had been resolutely corresponding with the will of God concerning her. She had retired within herself, and the doors of the external world being closed by her infirmities, the bright rays of divine grace darting from on high, had showed her the vileness and disorder of the soul she had believed already fit to receive his crowning graces ; and filled with confusion, she had exclaimed, “ Who am I, Lord, that I should desire honour and esteem ? ” She had arrived at the first degree of humility, which enabled her to accept, without internal murmuring, the disgraces and afflictions sent her ; and to receive the kind attentions of her sisters as an object merely of their mercy : and now, in order to advance farther in this science of the saints, she never permitted herself to expect the removal of her trials, but looked steadfastly for the time when, by the grace of God, they should assume a garb, and utter a language, that should charm her soul. At this time, an opening occurred for sister Ignatia to explain the circumstance which had brought on her the displeasure and correction of her superiors ; and at first, a tide of joy rushed on her

heart, and gave a power of speech and expression which she had believed gone for ever ; but she resisted this natural eagerness to vindicate herself, and on her knees, besought the Lord to take the affair so entirely into his own keeping, that if it were not for the good of her soul, she might never be tempted to disperse the cloud which shadowed her.

Her prayer was heard, and received its reward in the following manner. Two new postulants joined the community. They were not prepared for the appearance and movements of this afflicted sister ; and in their first surprise, could not conceal, even from herself, their laugh of derision. This, which to them, was a subject afterwards of deep regret and humiliation, was, for the first time, a cause of thankfulness to sister Ignatia ; and when, on the following morning, she stood in the choir, at the opening of prime, tears of joy—of a joy unknown before, coursed down her cheeks, as she felt an opening in her soul, through which, as each word of that “offering” fell on her ear, her divine spouse poured the rich consolations of his love. “O most divine and adorable Jesus, we offer up this first hour in honour and commemoration of thy being scoffed and falsely accused. O adorable Jesus, by the merits of these, thy exceeding great humiliations, we most humbly beseech thy divine Majesty to grant us the grace of a humble and contrite heart.”

“For years,” cried she, “have I been called by thy condescending love to share in thy humiliations, O my blessed Lord, and I have hitherto shrunk from them. O blind and dull of heart, to discover thus late the secret of the meek and humble, by which alone we are able to know thee, and, therefore, able fully to love thee ; for how love and be conformed to that which we know not ?” From this period, sister Ignatia, like Magdalen at the feet of Jesus, entered into the “sweet repose of a soul recollected in her beloved.”* There, bereft as it were of motion, she was to remain : and so fully did she perceive, accept, and love this state, that once, on partially recovering her hearing, when her superior wished to reinstate her in an office of trust, she besought the Lord, that if it were not from self-will, but in a spirit acceptable to Him, that her infirmities might never be removed. This farther prayer was heard. Sister Ignatia became still more infirm, and apparently vacant, while unutterable consolations distilled into her soul. On her deathbed, her external

* St Francis of Sales “On the love of God.”

faculties recovered ; and a few hours before her happy soul took flight from the prison of her body, when she was informed of the departure of sister Mary Gabrielle, she smiled, and calling her by her early name, " Caroline O'Mara, my joy is perfected, to know that thy salvation is secured. Yet, blessed soul, thou art detained from Heaven for a short space, till the slight tarnish given by human love and praise shall be effaced, and we together enter the bosom of our God !"

CHAPTER XXII.

The loved of childhood's vanish'd hours
Now mourn within her hall,
That the sweet sound of her gladsome step
On other ears must fall.

But their unforgotten names are breathed,
When, kneeling and alone,
She vows in humble prayer before
The King of Mercy's throne.

Irene.

Soon after the death of her two religious sisters, and just before she entered on the distant preparation for her holy profession, our heroine received from the hand of mother Juliana, a pencilled note, as follows :—

" The writer of this is now waiting within your convent enclosure, to know from yourself, whether you are willing to remember and admit your unchangeably attached KATHERINE GRAHAM."

If the change from Geraldine Carrington to the widowed Lady de Grey, had affected even the weaned and detached Angela, it may be supposed that the contrast was not less striking to Miss Graham—from the blooming joyous bride of Sir Eustace, to the subdued and placid sister of mercy. As our heroine entered the convent parlour, Katherine, who was seated at the farther end of the room, arose quickly, to meet and embrace her ; but stopping suddenly at the sight of that loved and well-remembered countenance, she covered her face with her hands, and sobbed with anguish.

"Katherine," said our heroine, "this visit will comfort you. Look on your friend as a happier—far happier being than you have ever known her."

The tones of her voice only increased the emotion felt by the warm-hearted and afflicted Katherine; but, at length, by a great effort, she controlled her grief, and, opening her arms, pressed the unresisting Geraldine to her heart.

"I have been on the Continent," said she, "and did not receive your letter till long after its date. It was forwarded to my address in Paris, but I had then gone to the baths of the Brunnen. As soon as I found that what I had taken for romantic dreaming was on the point of being executed, I left my party and returned to Scotland, where, after but a week's rest, I crossed from Port Patrick to Belfast, and arrived in this city last night. Oh, my beloved Geraldine, to have entered a convent some years ago would not have been so mad; but now, when so many discoveries have been made of the dreadful system carried on in these pretended asylums of sanctity, how can you? But perhaps we are overheard?" added she, lowering her voice.

"No, indeed, we are not," said Geraldine, smiling.

"I shall, however, confine my voice to a whisper," continued Miss Graham, "for there may be listeners you know not of; or if you do know of them, you are forced to keep the secret. Tell me Geraldine, how long have you been here?"

"Just fifteen months," replied our heroine.

"Fifteen months," repeated Katherine, pondering; "then you have been long enough to have discovered much, if not all, of the machinations and villanies of the cloistered life. Are there any cellars or vaults?"

"I do not know if there are any cellars," said Geraldine; "there are vaults beneath the chapel."

"Are there, indeed! Geraldine, tell me, I implore you, by our early friendship, by the memory of those years in which we thought and prayed alike, all that you know respecting those vaults?"

"I will tell you all I can know about them," replied Geraldine. "There is an outer and inner vault, which lie under the chapel and choir; the door, at the top of the stairs, which lead down to them, opens from the lower corridor; all which I can, with permission, show you."

"How did you find out all this?" cried Katherine, eagerly
"An inner vault—what is its use?"

"The deceased sisters of the convent lie there," replied Geraldine.

Katherine drew her chair close to Geraldine, and, in an agitated, imploring manner, whispered, "Are you sure that the dead only are immured there?"

"Ah, Katherine," said Geraldine, pressing the hand she held, "I have, indeed, been here long enough to have discovered part, if not all, the secrets of the convent life, and perceive that it would be as impossible for those histories from America and elsewhere to be true, as for purity to impart corruption, and truth a lie."

"You are taught to say all this," said Katherine, "or, perhaps, you may be still kept in ignorance; for you well know, Geraldine, how easily you could always be persuaded people were sincere and holy, when they were cheating and calumniating you all the time. You are too confiding, to have given much trouble hitherto to these convent politicians; but again, I well know you, Geraldine; if once your eyes be opened, there is no eluding your penetration, no curbing your indignation, and you will be quickly transferred to that inner vault, or some equally convenient place, where you will linger the victim of credulity. I came prepared," added she, still more softly, "to carry you off with me, and have a cloak and bonnet in the carriage, which my maid is to bring under her own cloak when she comes in the dusk to fetch me. We have arranged the whole. Jennings is to remain concealed in the convent until you, who are to appear as my maid, shall have followed me out of the enclosure, and reached the * * * hotel, which is kept by Protestants.

The arch smile of earlier days, played round Geraldine's mouth, as she listened to this well-devised plan; and she first asked Katherine why she supposed it would be difficult for her to make her escape at any time she wished, as she frequently left the enclosure with one of the sisters, to attend the sick and dying poor?

"But this very sister is a spy on you," said Katherine; "did you not write me word that two must be together?"

"I did so," said Geraldine, "and at the same time, Katherine, I gave you a sketch of our duties. Are they not incompatible with the histories you have heard?"

“ I certainly think better of this order of charity or mercy, as it is called, than of any other, because some good is really done by these sisters ; however, I have been informed, that the interior discipline is pretty much alike in all convents of tyranny and dark policy, where the victims cannot make known their misery,—where one or two designing and jealous characters, may work upon the weak many, to crush the object of their hatred.”

“ The interior discipline of convents is very much alike,” said Geraldine ; “ our rule is originally that of St Augustine, and our constitutions much resemble those of the Ursulines, in which order the scene was laid of the celebrated ‘ Six Months in a Convent.’ ”

Katherine looked amazed and even terrified at this avowal. “ Is any part of that book true ? ” said she.

“ The non-essentials are true, and the essentials false,” said Geraldine ; “ therefore it is a more artful book than any other of the kind published, where the romantic exaggerations can only amuse the reader. The authoress has evidently been in a convent ; and had not the consequences been so deplorable, I could be much diverted by the mistakes into which her ignorance, prejudice, and folly make her fall. But instead of commenting on the errors and crimes of those who have been permitted to persecute that order of religious, let me read to you, from the copy of our holy rule, the principle which actuates the life of every nun.” Geraldine accordingly returned to mother Juliana, to request permission to show their holy rule to her protestant friend.

“ My dear sister,” said mother Juliana, “ we do not place our holy rule in the hand of every curious inquirer.”

“ I am aware,” said Geraldine, “ that I am asking a great favour ; but when I shall have told you, dear mother, all the circumstances of this request, I think you will indulge me.” And our heroine did, at length, prevail on mother Juliana to apply for permission to the mother-superior, to show a copy of the rule to her protestant friend : which being granted, she returned with the book to Katherine, who opened it with great interest.

“ You will not have time, perhaps,” said Geraldine, “ to read the whole, therefore I will point out to you the parts which contain the higher duties.” And she directed Katherine’s attention, 1st, to the object of the institute : in which it is said, that beside the principal end of all religious orders, such as attending parti-

cularly to their own perfection, the sisters must also have in view what is peculiarly characteristic of this institute of the Sisters of Mercy, that is, a most serious application to the instruction of poor girls, to the visitation of the sick, and protection of distressed women of good character.

"All this is very good said Katherine, "except your presumption in supposing you can arrive at perfection. No one can be perfect on earth, and no scripture reader thinks of such a thing."

"And yet," said Geraldine, "it is in the scriptures that we find, 'Be ye perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.' But do not let us retrace our steps to the deserted ground of controversy, on the subject of God's free grace, and man's obligation to employ that grace for his salvation: it would only be a quarrel of terms and words, for we actually think alike, and so do our respective churches, on the helplessness of human nature without grace, and its capability of doing all things through Him who strengthens it. To keep perfectly the first of the commandments, even, is impossible, until we enter into the next life, for to love the Lord, our God, with all our heart, and with our whole soul, with our whole mind, and with our whole strength, which is to be continually absorbed in Him, and to employ all our powers in loving, serving, and adoring Him, this is a command equal to that of 'Be ye perfect.' But, Katherine, it much conduces to our spiritual advancement to aspire to the highest things, and the apostle advises us to do this, saying, 'Be zealous for the better gifts;' and the great writers on spiritual life follow St Paul in proposing to us the most perfect kind of virtue and devotion; that by our contemplation of what is best, we shall be able, at least, to perform the duties of strict obligation. To aim at the least and the lowest only, to calculate how little will satisfy God and ensure our salvation, deserves that He should withdraw the grace vouchsafed to us, and without which we can do nothing. Every Christian is bound,—oh! how strictly bound,—to a perfect life, by his baptismal vows: were they strictly kept by every one, there would be no need of cloisters. What is perfection? Is it not a continued union of the spirit with God, by faith contemplating Him, and by love adhering to Him? But let us proceed with the rule for the Sisters of Mercy."

Katherine glanced rapidly through the chapters relating to the exterior duties, the poor school, visitation of the sick, the admission of distressed women to the House of Mercy, all which she

felt and owned to be in the true spirit of the gospel. Next followed the chapters on the three vows; the two first she thought beautiful in feeling and expression, but when she came to the chapter on "Obedience," all the pride and independence of her nature arose in rebellion, at what she termed "that mean and pitiful vow," and she dwelt with attention on every word of the chapter.

"The mother-superior," said Geraldine, "besides the example which she is expected to give her spiritual daughters of every Christian virtue, is bound, under the vow of obedience, which she has herself made, to enforce the rule: nor can she command anything contrary to it. This being the case, you will cease to dread anything when you shall have read the chapter 'Of Union and Charity.'"

Katherine then read aloud as follows:—

"'Love one another as I have loved you.' This was the special command of Jesus Christ to his apostles, and in the accomplishment of this divine precept, inseparably united as it is with the great precept of the love of God, consists, according to the apostle, the plenitude of the law. This mutual love our blessed Saviour desires may be perfect, so as to resemble, in some manner, the love and union which subsist between Himself and his Heavenly Father. This He inculcates in the strongest terms, during the last conference of His mortal life with His beloved disciples; this was His last dying injunction, which, as a most valuable legacy, He bequeathed to all His followers, and by this they were to prove themselves really His disciples.

"'This mutual union and love should, therefore, eminently characterize religious souls; this should distinguish them, above all others, as faithful spouses and servants of Jesus Christ. The sisters of this pious institute, founded and grounded on charity, or holy love, should, therefore, make that favourite virtue of their divine Master, their own most favourite virtue; this they should study to maintain and cherish so perfectly amongst themselves as to live together as if they had but one heart and one soul in God; this love for one another should be such as to emulate the love and union of the blessed in heaven.

"'They shall, therefore, in conversation, manners, and conduct, most cautiously avoid whatever may, in the least, disturb their union, or lessen in the smallest degree their mutual charity. They shall, as true followers of God, walk in love, as Christ

loved us ; preserving, above all things, charity, which is the bond of perfection ; gaining over souls in the obedience of charity, and in sincerity of heart fervently loving each other.

“ They shall be willing, on all occasions, to help and assist one another ; bearing with patience and charity each other’s defects, weaknesses, and imperfections. They shall never enter into disputes ; but should they happen to differ in opinion on any subject, they shall propose their reasons with coolness, moderation, and charity. They shall never speak of the faults of the sisters, except to the mother-superior, and then only with a charitable desire of their amendment, and after consulting God in prayer, and their spiritual director. They shall avoid all rash suspicions and judgments, all jealousy and envy ; and shall always bear in mind, to regulate their sentiments on this head, the noble description of charity given by the apostle,—‘ Charity is patient, is kind, envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil, beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.’

“ As the love and union of religious persons should be founded, not on flesh and blood, or any human motive, but on God alone,—as their hearts should be united together in Jesus Christ, their Spouse and Redeemer, in whom, and for whom, they should live and love one another,—the sisters of this religious institute shall banish all particular friendships, attachments, and affections, from amongst them ; and shall scrupulously avoid all private parties and connexions, as the source of discord and divisions, and as hostile to purity of heart, to charity, and to the spirit of religion.’

“ This is all beautiful,” said Katherine ; “ I have never read anything more so ; it is the perfection of Christian love.”

“ And *must* be followed,” said Geraldine ; “ not slightly, or partially, but constantly and entirely. And now, tell me, Katherine, are you not convinced, that it would be perfectly impossible for persons bound by such vows, to persecute each other ?”

“ I admit,” said Katherine, “ that the theory of all this is admirable ; but you know very well, Geraldine, that theory without practice is null and void.”

Here the friends were interrupted by a young professed sister, came, on the part of mother Juliana, to say, that sister

Mary Paula's services in the school would be supplied by another novice ; therefore she might remain with her friend.

"That is very obliging," said Miss Graham, "but I should very much like to see your school ;" and she arose to follow the sister.

"The children," said sister Veronica, "are just preparing for the 'examination of conscience ;' perhaps you would rather see the school at some other time ?"

"No, indeed," said Katherine ; "I know enough of the usual routine of schools. I would rather see something new, if I may accompany you ; and I do not understand what you mean by this public examination of conscience, unless it be like the methodist manifestation, or experience, of their spiritual state."

As Geraldine perceived that Miss Graham was pleased with the young sister, and willing to see more of her, she left them, to be ready for the examination in the choir before noon, and Katherine followed sister Veronica to the school-room, where all were prepared to obey the bell. At the top of the room was raised a seat, in which was the presiding sister, who, on the signal, arose and gave out the short prayer that follows :—

"My God, I adore you ; I love you ; I return you thanks for all your benefits. Come, Holy Spirit, enlighten my mind, that I may discover all the faults whereby I have offended my Heavenly Father."

Sister Ursula then read, in a distinct and impressive manner, the heads of the examination of conscience for that day.

"God created me for His glory ; to know, to love, and to serve Him in this life, and to be happy with Him for ever in the next.

"Do I give glory to God ? Could He look on me now, and say, 'I rejoice that I created that child ; she takes pains to serve me faithfully ?'"

"Let each girl ask herself this question."

The question was then repeated in the same manner, after which there was a pause ; and Miss Graham's searching eye was directed to the upper classes, where their demeanour led her to hope, notwithstanding the sudden entrance of a stranger, that the solemn question was receiving an answer from the heart of each.

After the pause had continued a few minutes, the sister continued : "'Do I endeavour to know God, by learning what he has taught, which is contained in my catechism, and which He

requires me to know and to practise?' Let each one ask herself this question." Another pause, after which followed:—

"‘Do I love God? Should I be unhappy if I thought He were angry with me? and if I displeased Him, should I do all in my power to be forgiven?’—A pause. “‘Do I love God? Do I say my prayers, night and morning? Do I go to mass on every Sunday and holyday? Do I go regularly to confession? Do I hate sin? Do I attend to all my religious duties?’”

During the pause which succeeded, the recollection of the elder girls continued apparently rapt to Miss Graham's admiration; and she felt no inclination to be severe towards a row of laughing eyes, which peeped at her through fat and rosy fingers, from the little class near her.

The last question then followed. “‘Do I recollect the fault to which I am most subject?’”

After the last pause, the sister gave the signal to kneel, and said, in the name of each child,—“‘For these, and all the sin of my life, I am sincerely and heartily sorry. I humbly beg pardon for them, through the merits of my divine Saviour; and I resolve, with the grace of God, not to be guilty of them any more.’”

The Angelus Domini rang, as sister Ursula concluded. Miss Graham remained during the succeeding acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity; with the “Litany of Jesus,” in which she joined with fervour; and when the devotions were concluded, remained some time conversing with the sisters, on the various regulations and discipline of the school, with all which she was much pleased, and, on our heroine's reappearing, willingly consented to the proposal of visiting the House of Mercy, which was in the opposite wing of the convent.

“I have often regretted,” said Katherine, “that while we erect and support penitentiaries, and Magdalene asylums without end, we have no places of safety and peace for the innocent. Prevention is better than cure; and it is hard indeed, that misfortune must be accompanied by guilt before it can be relieved.”

Two lay-sisters were superintending the House of Mercy, under a choir sister, who, from a recent change of offices, was now sister Margaret. The tie of country, and of distant kindred, was discovered and claimed by Katherine, who engaged in an animated and friendly discourse with sister Margaret, as she walked over the rooms devoted to the labours and repose of the

inmates of the house. Some of those who were preparing, under strict discipline, to re-enter some service in private families, had been rescued from death, or worse than death; and their histories served to confirm Miss Graham in her determination to serve the destitute and still virtuous servant out of place. She left a handsome benefaction for this House of Mercy; and returning with Geraldine into the convent, was shown over the principal part, and then again into the reception parlour.

"I have been greatly interested," said Katherine; "I think the life led here is at once useful, pious, and happy; and would be without a draw-back if you were at liberty to leave it, and could give to God the free offering of a willing heart, unshackled by vows."

"But why leave a life that is at once useful, pious, and happy?" said Geraldine. "Why be so ungenerous towards our God, as to *lend* him our services, instead of *giving* them with all the confiding affection of a true spouse?"

"But," said Katherine, "I think it would give far greater edification, especially to Protestants, were they to know, that a community, who might disperse at the end of every year, yet remained firm to their choice of life through every difficulty that might arise. There is nothing inspires a Protestant with greater pity, than the bondage of irrevocable vows."

"Because," replied Geraldine, "few Protestants comprehend the nature of the union which, by her generous surrender, the soul then contracts with her Heavenly Spouse. For my own part, and I speak the feelings of every sister here, it would be impossible for me to offer 'the holocaust' for any limited period. My voice might be compelled to utter the incomplete vows, but I should then be guilty of 'mental reservation,' for my heart and voice would be at variance."

Katherine was now playing with the rosary which hung from Geraldine's cincture, and remained in abstracted thought till the latter said, playfully, "There is one omission, which has only just occurred to me,—you have not searched the vaults."

Katherine smiled and sighed. "I do not fear anything for you now, Geraldine; I believe you will be happy, even while telling these beads;" and she counted the relative number of "Pater Nosters" and "Ave Marias," and again smiled and sighed.

"The rosary," said Geraldine, "is a combination of vocal and

mental prayer It is true that we say a great many 'Ave Marias,' but during each decade there is some mystery in the life and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, on which we fix our minds and hearts. To-day we commemorate, each in private devotion, the five sorrowful mysteries: the agony in the garden—the scourging at the pillar—the crowning with thorns—the carriage of the cross—and the crucifixion; and while I dwell on each, I call to my aid that blessed creature, who in His love and sufferings bore the greatest share; letting my mind gently pass and repass, from the words I utter, to the subject of my meditation."

"They are, indeed, subjects," said Katherine, "on which the mind may dwell with increased love and gratitude."

"Yes," added Geraldine, "especially in that first mystery of love and sorrow, the agony of Jesus in the garden of Olives, in which all the other points of the passion seem to be comprised."

Evening arrived, and Katherine Graham confessed to have no wish to carry on her plot for Geraldine's escape. The few tears she shed at parting had no bitterness in them, for Katherine's was a generous heart, and she felt comfort in the conviction of her friend's happiness. She carried with her several little keepsakes from the community; amongst the rest, a card, on which, in her countrywoman's clear printing, were the fourteen corporal and spiritual works of Mercy, as defined by the Church, viz:—

1. To feed the hungry.
 2. To give drink to the thirsty.
 3. To clothe the naked.
 4. To harbour the harbourless.
 5. To visit the sick.
 6. To visit the imprisoned.
 7. To bury the dead.
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1. To counsel the doubtful.
 2. To instruct the ignorant.
 3. To admonish sinners.
 4. To comfort the afflicted.
 5. To forgive injuries.
 6. To bear wrongs patiently.
 7. To pray for the living and the dead

CHAPTER XXIII.

Ours is the sweet repose of hearts repenting,
The deep calm sky, the sunshine of the soul ;
Now heaven and earth are to our bliss consenting,
And all the Godhead joins to make us whole !
The triple crown of mercy now,
Is ready for the suppliant's brow ;
By the Almighty Three for ever plann'd,
And from behind the cloud held out by Jesus' hand.

Keeble.

GERALDINE continued to dwell with interest on thoughts connected with the two departed sisters, and in one of her conversations with the mother-superior, having expressed a wish to learn the hidden life of sister Ignatia, the latter assured her, that the hidden life does not require those fences from the external world, which were necessary to the character of sister Ignatia. "She had," continued the mother-superior, "a disposition peculiarly prone to live out of herself, and to depend on others for her happiness. You, sister Mary Paula, who are so much interested in watching the variety of means by which Almighty God effects the sanctification of his creatures, especially as evidenced in the spiritual lives of our two departed sisters, may now receive edification from one of whom I am constantly taking a silent lesson, and who leads a life more completely hidden than even sister Ignatia ; or to speak more correctly, she leads a more supernatural life ; for, in the midst of exterior occupations, her soul is in peace : nothing ever troubles her, because nothing unduly interests her ; and whether an arrangement succeed or not, as she knows that in the end God must be equally glorified, so is she equally and calmly pleased ; for she dwells on earth but through necessity,—her heart is in heaven. This holy indifference to everything that is not God, produces an evenness of demeanour and of temper towards all. Many of the sisters have advanced far in this blessed science of the interior life, but none so perfectly as our mother-assistant."

"The mother-assistant!" echoed Geraldine, a little disappointed ; "to own the truth, dearest reverend mother, she has not interested me at all "

"She does not wish to interest you or any one," replied the mother-superior, smiling, "she wishes to be hidden with God; and you see how well she has succeeded."

"I shall with great satisfaction hear more," said our heroine, 'for, beyond the general edification she gives in common with the rest of the sisterhood, I cannot recall a single word or deed of the mother-assistant, by which I should derive profit."

"She has not been called upon to give you edification beyond what you mention," said the mother-superior, still smiling. "Have you not heard the saying, that 'if each one attended solely to her own business, the convent would be a heaven on earth? No one enforced this more, when mother-superior, and no one follows it more truly now she is under obedience, than our mother-assistant.'"

"I was not aware that she had ever been superior," said our heroine.

"She was not only superior, but at the end of the three years, was re-elected. Previously to being superior, she had been mistress of novices."

"Then," said Geraldine, "I understand and greatly admire the silence, the humility, the obscurity of her life, as it now appears to me. How great the constraint might be over the cheerful harmony of the community, if she were obviously remembering 'how things were,' during her office of superior or mistress of novices."

"The hidden life, to be truly such, must not betray itself," said the mother-superior; "a sister who desires to be truly hidden with Christ in God, should present nothing that could distinguish her from the rest of the sisterhood. Her manner, her movements, should be so unobtrusive, as to excite no attention; and at recreation, she should endeavour to promote the general cheerfulness rather by engaging others to talk, than by speaking much herself: and this little stratagem of the humble, our mother-assistant has perfectly attained. You will do well to observe, at the next opportunity, the easy unaffected manner in which she will throw out some little topic for others to enlarge upon, and then retire into a silence that appears not to be such, from the smiling attention she gives each speaker. To farther appreciate mother-assistant's spirit of recollection," continued the superior, "you should know more of her office, which is not only, as the name implies, to give aid to the mother-superior,

and supply for her occasional absence from choir and other public offices, but it is also her duty to inquire into and provide for all the wants of the sisters, which, with some dispositions, might lead to incessant talking and bustle. She also superintends sister Josephine's charge of the clothing for the poor, and the lay-sisters in the soup and other food distributed to them. She makes out the lists of places to be visited, and for the distribution of the charity, after it has been submitted to me for approval: and, although the bursar has the immediate charge of all the housekeeping and accounts, she consults with mother-assistant in every difficulty: so that there cannot be well imagined a situation in which the soul is more tempted to distraction and trouble about many things, than in the office held by her, whose tranquillity of soul I propose as a model for all the sisters."

"Mother-assistant is not the only one who avoids speaking of herself," thought Geraldine, as she listened to these well merited encomiums, from one to whom she had given and continued to give her highest meed of praise.

"When mother-assistant was superior," continued her successor, "her exhortations, whether in public or private, invariably ended in recommending peace to the soul; and her previous reasoning had been so effective, that it was rarely that turbulent or vexing thoughts continued to harass those who had been to her for counsel and comfort. I have mentioned to you the exterior duties of mother-assistant, that you may perceive, not only that they disturb not a soul that is once settled in holy peace, but also, that you may fully appreciate the humility which prevents her from ever mentioning at recreation or other times, any circumstances relating to her own department. No one would be aware from anything that falls from her lips, that she held any office whatever in the convent. And she might almost be said, neither to be seen nor heard in the midst of questions and directions of all kinds, so great is the calm reserve of her whole demeanour; and obscured and tarnished as a human copy must ever be of any perfection of the Deity, to her, if to any mortal, might be applied the saying of St Augustine, 'always in action, and always in repose.'"

"This feeling or principle," said Geraldine, "which prevents mother-assistant from ever alluding even distantly to her many occupations, might arise merely from that instinctive good taste

and refinement which would prevent a lady in the world from introducing her household concerns, but it is from a purer motive, that of humility: and this necessity of a pure intention must hold good in every demonstration of virtue. Otherwise, a sister may flatter herself she is a lover of silence, when she is only sullen, very disengaged when she is only very selfish, and very interior when she is only very indolent."

"Self-knowledge," said the mother-superior, "which is the preparation for the spiritual life, and receives the foundation-stone of humility, is the only security against our building mere 'castles in the air.'"

"There is nothing I admire more profoundly," said Geraldine, "than a calm state of mind; the extreme and abuse of which, however, would be indolence, and at length stagnation: and I love the epithet 'holy,' which is a guarantee that the virtue to which it is prefixed, is protected by divine grace. 'Holy' silence, the offspring of humility, and of the loving sense of the presence of God, must be twin-born with peace."

"For the obtaining this blessed calm of the soul, great and painful sacrifices may be required," said the mother-superior, "but when once established, prayer and watchfulness are alone requisite to preserve it, and this very watchfulness must be calm."

"Exterior occupations and contradictions can no more disturb this blessed peace," said Geraldine, "than do the innumerable boats and vessels which glide on the surface of a calm lake; but let interior conflicts arise,—spiritual combats,—and where then is the peace, the calm of the soul? Must it not resemble that same lake, whose once smooth and lucid waters are now tossed and foaming, from the hidden tempest nursed within? This calm must surely be a supernatural gift, to be totally imperturbable, and a gift not always granted to the most faithful and holy souls, which are often tried by interior anguish through the whole of their spiritual life."

"The higher region of the soul may rest in peace," said the mother-superior, "although the tempest may agitate the inferior part, and she will calmly suffer this purifying process of interior tribulation; for the peace which she has attained, and hopes to regain, she desires not for her own consolation, but for the glory of God; not that she may enjoy rest, but that she may be enabled to contemplate and adore, without hindrance, the

divine perfections, and become, in that contemplation, moulded to His image. While, therefore, temptations and anguish assail the soul, till she is apparently overwhelmed by them, and may, like Jonah, exclaim, 'All Thy billows and Thy waves have passed over me . . . I am cast away out of the sight of Thy eyes,'—she adds with the same prophet, 'but yet I shall see again Thy holy temple!'

"There is a state in which the soul would be more apt to lose her blessed peace," said Geraldine, "than even under the trials and temptations we have described. It is that, in which her calm seems to be sunk into a total indifference, not only to earthly, but to heavenly things; and she, calmly it is true, but stupidly, pursues her way, more vegetating than alive; admitting every truth of religion in a dry abstract manner, without a single emotion of gratitude or joy. In this state, when spiritual sloth must so reasonably be dreaded, it appears to me, that the soul, in rousing from it, and in dread of its recurrence, would be in danger of a violent reaction, and lose her holy calm in the effort to escape from tepidity."

"The life of faith is a life of humiliation and mortification," replied the mother-superior; "and the soul in the state you describe, is undergoing the trial of that faith, without any other light or support that she can perceive. She has to force her apparently cold heart through all her religious duties, without experiencing any reward for her fidelity, in the sensible emotions of hope and love; and, as you justly observe, there is danger of her fearing that she has lost them, and of mistaking this aridity for sloth. But let her continue faithful to every duty, and sloth will not be permitted to steal over her in the guise of holy calm. She is beloved of God, although she cannot perceive it; and loves Him more in this hour of desolation, than when she the most rejoiced in her emotions of ardour and tenderness; let her continue watchful and resolute, and she need not quit her holy calm for an artificial state of anxiety and care."

Geraldine, after this conversation, felt much comforted and encouraged. She had justly considered the case of sister Ignatia as extraordinary, and not to be expected; yet, it had seemed to authorise her belief, that to be fenced from exterior things was the only means by which the soul could enter into communion and rest with God; but she now perceived, that when the soul has once arrived at the contemplative life, exterior employments

do not molest her ; for the soul has then gained that power of attention to God supremely, which prevents the inferior attention given to creatures, from disturbing her blessed peace. God being not only the principle of all her actions, but absorbing all her superior faculties. She then becomes suspended from creatures in the will and affections, and united to the Divinity, so as to be even lost to herself in His truth and love.

It was with this desire and ambition, that our heroine entered on the two months' preparation for her holy profession. Her ardour was not abated ; on the contrary, it was more intense than when she entered on that for her reception ; but it was now silent, calm, little to be perceived by others, and requiring not the human sympathy heretofore so essential to her happiness.

She had, during the year and a half past in her noviciate, considered the truth, and fully embraced it, that the noviciate is the precious time for acquiring knowledge of spiritual things, and of attaining to such a degree of contemplation, that the exterior affairs which would surround her after her profession, might be as though they were not. She now took a review of this period, during which the two essential parts of the contemplative life,—mortification and prayer,—had been her study. Mortification, or renunciation, which comprises all those virtues of patience, humility, and temperance, by which we die to ourselves ; and prayer, by which we unite with God. This retrospection was calculated to inspire her with humble confidence that God would continue the good work begun in her ; and while she resolved to co-operate faithfully with the grace vouchsafed her, she was desirous not to force on her way beyond the leadings of the Spirit, remembering, that “the spiritual part of the soul should have the same patience with the sensitive part, that she would exercise towards another person.”

In the retreat which Geraldine had now entered upon, a greater portion of her time was dedicated to mental prayer ; which consists of meditations on those subjects which were most suited to her state of preparation. Thus, the early days of it were dedicated to contemplating the perfections of the Deity, and the benefits conferred on her by having been created for an immortality of bliss, by her preservation and redemption, and the more especial favours of conversion to the true faith, and a call to a life of religion ; under which considerations, the

soul of Geraldine was overwhelmed with sentiments of adoration and praise towards Him—the Holy One, to whom she was about to consecrate herself for ever.

Her meditations were afterwards directed to sin, and its direful effects on the soul, as preventing her from giving herself entirely to God ; which, even in its lesser degree, stains and weakens the soul, so as to expose it to temptation, and to grievous offences, even to the danger of mortal sin.

Applying these considerations to herself, she discovered, by rigid self-examination, those tendencies which she conceived most dangerous to her, and as presenting obstacles to her perfect conversion and entire dedication to God. The three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, which she was about to take, were necessarily opposed, and offered correctives to whatever affections or attachments yet remained to prevent her perfect union with God ; and, with her soul washed by tears of contrition, through the merits of her Saviour, it now panted to make an offering of its faculties, its powers, and its whole being, to God, on the altar of faith. Thus was she led, by a thorough detachment from earthly objects, into a fitting state for those meditations which followed, and which principally consisted in contemplating the life and sufferings of her heavenly Redeemer.

First, on the examples which our Lord, in his passion, has given us of a perfect holocaust : the first meditation being on His prayer and agony in the garden, in which mystery she was principally called upon to consider the voluntary acceptance which Jesus Christ made of His death ; for although He accepted it at the moment of His incarnation, yet was He pleased to accept of it anew in this solitude of the garden of Gethsemani, and permitted the sensitive or inferior part of His soul to feel the bitterness of that all-surpassing death,—and even to oppose it, saying, “ Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me ;” while the spiritual, or superior part of His soul remained immoveable, and added, “ not my will but *Thine* be done.” In these struggles and combats of His soul, when all the ignominies, tortures, and derelictions of His passion, were spread in foretaste to His mental vision—when the blood which had rushed from its natural course, burst forth from a l parts of His body—when an angel was sent to comfort His sacred humanity, he accepted the weight of human penalty and divine wrath, and entered on the tremendous death before Him. These considera-

tions would make the destined spouse of Jesus, then, after His example, conquer the repugnance which the sensitive, or inferior region of the soul may feel in the mystical death of her religious profession ; and, with a generous effort of love, let the spiritual and superior part accept this death, with all its internal and external sufferings.

Secondly, in following the Divine Jesus through every stage of His prolonged sufferings, in which was realized the prophecy of Isaiah, “ We have seen him, and there was no beauty in him. He was as a leper, and one forsaken of God ; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity.” With a heart melted by these bitter contemplations, the soul of one seeking to live only to Jesus, exclaims, “ O Lord, my heart is ready ! let my death be like Thine, consummated !”

Pursuing her considerations, she beheld her divine Saviour triumphing over sin, death, and the devil, from whom He gathers all the spoils. Now is the prophecy of Isaiah accomplished,—“ I will arise, saith the Lord ; I will be exalted and extolled, and I will be exceeding high.” Adore Him in this glorious state, and while rejoicing with ardent love, remember, that all this glory is the fruit of His death.

The glorious ascension of our Lord, presented to Geraldine a blessed contemplation, in which she saw that earth cannot delight her who has spiritually risen with Jesus Christ, but that she must seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God ; for, “ where her treasure is, there also must be her heart.”

Her conversation, likewise, “ is in heaven,” with God and his angels, so as to converse but little with creatures, but reserving herself in interior recollection and retreat, for spiritual intercourse with the inhabitants of heaven ; speaking to them often in prayer, that by this communication, separating herself from the earth, she may become celestial.

Meditating on the coming of the Holy Ghost, the source and principle of divine life, she considered how the apostles, after the ascension, withdrew into solitude, there to await the promised Paraclete, or Comforter ; thus setting her an example of preparation, that the “ love of God might be poured forth into her heart by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.”

The consideration of the great work of Redemption could not but give rise to reflections in Geraldine’s mind, on her lost con-

dition by nature ;—first, in original sin, and then replunged in actual sin ; stripped of grace and virtue, in a total incapacity to good, and violent propensity to evil ; when, notwithstanding this deplorable state, God looked on her with the design of taking her for His spouse, saying, “ Let her live ;” that is, the life of grace ; and for this end, when she had forfeited her renewed innocence in baptism, restored her to His grace by the sacrament of penance, anointed her with the oil of grace in confirmation, gave her Himself in the adorable sacrament of the altar, and having thus rendered her capable of the divine alliance, is about to take her to himself in quality of his most dear spouse. Thus humbled in her own eyes, by the sight of her origin and helplessness, and filled with gratitude at the unmerited favours heaped upon her, the affianced soul sighs to think, with how many more beauties and ornaments of grace would she have been enriched from the same bountiful hand, had she been more faithful to those received.

Geraldine was then led to meditate especially on the chief of these graces,—namely, on the Holy Sacrament of the body, blood, soul, and Divinity, of Jesus Christ, by which her soul had been nourished and prepared for the divine espousals, and by which the celestial life was to be sustained in her soul ; admiring the means which God employs to preserve the union He has contracted ; and saying with St Ignatius, the martyr, “ I take no pleasure in corruptible meats, nor do I desire the dainties of the world ; I wish only for the bread of life—the bread of God ; I desire no drink but the blood of Him who is incorruptible love, and eternal life.”

XXV

CHAPTER XXV.

He comes not in power, He comes not in wrath,
 And the glory of heaven is not on His path ;
 The children of men bear the monarch of might,
 And low, with the lowly, He veileth His light ;
 Yet, lift up, ye gates, O ye princes,—'tis He !
 The monarch of glory, who cometh to me.
 Who then is this monarch of glory ?—reply :
 The Lord strong in battle, the great God on High.
 But, who is this monarch of glory ? O say :
 Favour'd soul ! 'tis the spouse who has won thee to-day.

*By a Nun, on receiving the Blessed Sacrament at
 her profession, Salford Convent.*

THE day at length arose, calm and bright as their hopes, on which our heroine, and her three English religious sisters, were greeted with those joyous words, " Behold the bridegroom cometh ! Go ye forth to meet him : " that day which they were to consider as the image of eternity, since they were then to commence that strict union with God, which by His grace, would be at length consummated in glory. Their meditation that morning was on the words of the Prophet Hosea, " And I will espouse thee to me for ever. I will espouse thee in justice and in judgment, in loving kindness and in tender mercy ; I will espouse thee in faith. "

The ceremony took place at an early hour, with holy mass and communion. The religious sisterhood had, at a previous mass, offered up the intention of their communion for the novices about to be professed. All was on that day in harmony with the hidden life into which these were to enter. With the exception of the pious benefactress of the convent, all who filled the chapel and choir were consecrated to the immediate service of God. A congregation of holy priests and friars, who had themselves despised the " empire of the world and the grandeur of the earth, "—and whose presence was the only thing that recalled our heroine to a silent consent and satisfaction in the sympathy and support of human example,—gave her a foretaste of that blessed communion of saints to be hereafter perfected in glory.

The procession now began,—preceded, as on the day of the reception, by the Cross-bearer, while the choir sang the " Veni

Creator ;" and having entered the choir, Geraldine knelt at the grate ; the act of profession, with pen and ink, lay near her.

The bishop now intoned from the altar, "Emitte spiritum tuum," &c. "Send forth thy spirit, and they shall be created."

Response.—"And thou shalt renew the face of the earth."

Celebrant. "Let us pray.—O God, who by the light of the Holy Ghost, hast instructed the hearts of the faithful, grant us in the same Spirit a right understanding, and ever to rejoice in His consolations, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The bishop then blessed the black veils which lay near the altar, saying, "Our help is in the name of the Lord."

R. "Who made heaven and earth."

V. "Show us, O Lord, Thy mercy."

R. "And grant us Thy salvation."

V. "O Lord God of Hosts convert us."

R. "And show Thy face, and we shall be saved."

V. "O Lord, hear my prayer."

R. "And let my cry come unto Thee."

V. "The Lord be with you."

R. "And with thy spirit."

V. "Let us pray.—We humbly beseech Thee, O Lord, that Thy bounteous blessing may descend on these garments which are to be put on the heads of Thy servants, and that they may be blessed, consecrated, unspotted, and holy, through Christ our Lord. Amen."

"O God! Head of all the faithful, and Saviour of the whole body, sanctify with Thy right hand these coverings of the veil, which for Thy love and Thy most blessed Mother's, Thy servants are about to have placed on their heads ; and may they by Thy protection, with equal purity of mind and body, ever preserve what is mystically signified thereby ; that when, with the prudent virgins, they may come to the everlasting recompense of the Saints, they being also prepared, may be worthy to enter, conducted by Thee, to the nuptials of endless felicity, who livest and reignest one God, for ever and ever. Amen."

The bishop then sprinkled the veils with holy water, in the name of the Blessed Trinity, and the following gospel was chanted by the officiating deacon.

"At that time Jesus said to his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow me. Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and he

that shall lose his life for my sake, shall find it ; for what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he will render to every one according to his works.'"

The mother-superior and assistant then conducted our heroine to the grate, where, on her knees, she was thus interrogated by the bishop, " My child, what do you demand ?"

" My lord, I most humbly beg to be received to the holy profession."

" My child, do you consider yourself sufficiently instructed in what regards the vows of religion and the rules and constitutions of this institute ? and do you know the obligations you contract by the holy profession ?"

" Yes, my lord, with the grace of God."

" May God grant you perseverance in your holy resolution, and may He deign, in His mercy, to consummate what He has begun. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Sisters Mary Camilla, Mary Vincent and Josephine, then succeeded our heroine at the grate of the choir, being questioned in the same manner by the bishop ; after which, the organ pealed forth its rich tones at different intervals, and announced the solemn mass of the Holy Ghost, during which, the following prayers were said.

" Grant, O Lord, to these Thy servants, whom Thou hast deigned to adorn with the honour of chastity, effectually to complete the work they have undertaken ; and, that they may present to Thee its full perfection, may they deserve to bring what they have begun to a conclusion, through our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son, who with Thee, liveth and reigneth in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen."

" Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord, in virtue of the sacrifice presented to Thee, that Thy servants here present may persevere to the end of their lives, that the gates being open at the coming of the great King, they may be worthy to enter with joy into Thy heavenly kingdom, through Christ our Lord," &c.

Post Communion.

" O God, who hast established Thy habitation in a chaste heart, look down upon these Thy servants, and may they receive

Thy consolation, whatsoever they require, through our Lord Jesus Christ," &c.

The mother-superior then chanted the versicle, " Offer to God the sacrifice of praise."

Response.—" And pay thy vows to the Most High."

In the mean time, the mother-assistant had taken the lighted taper from Geraldine, and given her the act of profession. She then advanced to the grate and sang the "*Vota mea Domino*," &c. ; " I will pay my vows to the Lord, in the sight of all His people, in the courts of the house of the Lord." Geraldine then knelt, and the Confiteor was said, after which, the bishop pronouncing the "*Domine non sum dignus*," &c. ; " Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof," &c., approached the grate, bearing with all solemnity the adorable Sacrament, which he held before her, while she thus pronounced her vows.

" In the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and under the protection of His immaculate Mother, Mary, ever Virgin, I, Geraldine Carrington de Grey, called in religion, sister Mary Paula, of the most Holy Trinity, do vow and promise to God perpetual poverty, chastity, obedience and the service of the poor, sick, and ignorant, and to persevere until the end of my life in this Institute of our Blessed Lady of Mercy, according to its approved rule and constitutions, under the authority and in presence of you, my Lord and Right Reverend Father in God, Patrick M'Namara, bishop of this diocese, and of our Reverend Mother, Honora O'Brian, called in religion, Mary Theresa, mother-superior of this convent of our Lady of Mercy. This day of in the year of our Lord ."

Our heroine then marking with the pen given to her a cross after her signature, delivered the act of profession to the mother-assistant, who knelt at her left hand, and the awful moment—the concentration—the essence, as it were, of the whole solemn rite, when her soul having pledged herself to her divine Spouse, was to receive in return His pledge and earnest of mystical union: that moment was arrived, and the bishop, pronouncing the following words, administered to her the Holy Communion.

" What God has commenced in thee, may He Himself perfect: and may the body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto life everlasting. Amen."

With feelings far more of heaven than of earth, sister Mary

Paula retired from the grate, and the three sister-aspirants to the same heavenly espousals, advanced each in turn to the grate; our heroine was conducted to the mother-superior, and, kneeling, presented to her the Act of Profession, and received from her in return the sacred ring, which had been previously consecrated by the following prayers:—

“O, Creator and preserver of the human race, giver of spiritual joy, guide to eternal salvation, deign Thou, O Lord, to send Thy holy spirit, the paraclete, from Heaven, and Thy holy benediction on this ring, that it may be a powerful defence against every assault of the Devil. And in Thy name I bless + and consecrate + it. In the name of the Father +, and of the Son +, and of the Holy + Ghost. Amen.”

When the mother-superior had received from the four newly-professed sisters the Acts of their Profession, and had placed on the finger of each the sacred symbol of her espousals, they retired to their usual places in the choir, and from the altar the antiphons and prayers continued thus:—

“Come, Holy Ghost, replenish the hearts of Thy faithful, and kindle within them the fire of Thy divine love.

“O God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires are known, and from whom no secrets are hidden, purify the thoughts of our hearts by the inspirations of Thy holy spirit, that we may deserve perfectly to love Thee, and worthily to praise Thee, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with Thee, and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.”

“We beseech Thee, O Lord, that our actions may be preceded by Thy inspirations, and carried on by Thy assistance, that every prayer and work of ours may always begin with Thee, and by Thee be happily ended, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.”

During this last prayer, Geraldine and her three companions were instructed to rise, and having again advanced to the grate, to kneel there during the following prayers:—

V. “The Lord be with you.”

A. “And with thy spirit.”

V. “Let us pray. O Eternal God, and Almighty Father, who knowest the weakness of human frailty, look down, we beseech Thee, on these Thy servants, and vouchsafe to strengthen their weakness with the overflowing abundance of Thy benediction, that, assisted by Thy grace, they may, by a holy, pious, and religious life, be able vigilantly to keep the vows which they

have made, by the influence of Thy holy inspiration, through Christ, our Lord. Amen."

"Let us pray. May the Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, who willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live, who calleth all to repentance in his unspeakable mercy and wonted tenderness, may He inspire you with true and constant contrition of heart and holy repentance, that you may be able worthily to wear the habit of religion and holy profession, and, following your holy promises, persevere in His holy service, and happily arrive, with His elect, for everlasting joys. Who, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. Amen."

The bishop then sprinkling the newly professed with holy water, in the name of the blessed Trinity, the choir commenced the "Tenuisti manum, &c." "Thou hast held me by my right hand: and by Thy will Thou hast conducted me: and with glory Thou hast received me."

Response.—"For what have I in Heaven, and, besides Thee, what do I desire upon earth?"

The newly-professed sisters then replied, in unison, "Defecit caro mea, &c." "For Thee my flesh and my heart have fainted. Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever."

The bishop then entoned the "Veni Sponsa Christi;" "Come, Spouse of Christ;" which the choir continued thus, "Receive the crown, which the Lord hath prepared for thee for ever.

"May the Lord be to thee a helper and protector, and pardon all thy sins. Amen."

Geraldine then sang the "Suscipe me, Domine, &c." three times, in honour of the blessed Trinity, the music changing not in air but in key, which produced a solemn and touching effect. "Uphold me, according to Thy word, and I shall live, and let me not be confounded in my expectation." Then, kneeling, she received the black veil from the bishop, who said, in placing it on her head,

"Receive the holy veil, the emblem of chastity and modesty, which mayest thou carry before the judgment-seat of our Lord Jesus Christ, that thou mayest have eternal life, and mayest live for ever. Amen."

Geraldine then rising, and holding her lighted taper, sang the

"Posuit signum ;" "He has placed his seal upon my forehead, that I should admit no other lover but Him."

The other newly-professed sisters then received each her veil with the same forms, and all kneeling, the bishop blessed them as follows :—

"May God the Father, who in the beginning created all things, bless you. Amen.

"May God the Son who, as our Saviour came down from heaven, and did not refuse to suffer the death of the Cross, bless you. Amen.

"May God the Holy Ghost, who in the river Jordan, rested on Christ in the form of a dove, bless you. Amen.

"And may He in perfect Trinity, sanctify and preserve you all the days of your life, whom we expect to come to judgment : who with the Father and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen."

"May the Lord pardon all your infirmities."

"Amen."

"May He heal all your diseases."

"Amen."

"May He redeem your life from destruction."

"Amen."

"May He strengthen and confirm in all things your desire, who in perfect Trinity, liveth and reigneth one God, world without end. Amen."

Then was entoned the "Regnum Mundi," &c. "The empire of this world and all the grandeur of this earth, I have despised for love of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom I have seen, whom I have loved, in whom I have believed, and towards whom my heart inclineth."

"My heart hath uttered a good word, I speak my works to the King."

"I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my Lord Jesus Christ. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost."

The newly-professed sisters then prostrated themselves, and while they thus lay dead to the world and admitted to the sweet joy of the new and celestial life, the glorious "Te Deum" arose in solemn chant, from the holy brethren and sisters in the chapel and choir.

What were the thoughts and aspirations of our heroine, as

thus she found consummated the intense desires of her heart? We cannot tell,—we presume not to intrude on the holy retirement of her soul with God, and henceforth we must conjecture more than certify her thoughts; for she has found the secret of that hidden joy laid up for those who seek to be forgotten; who, turning from the affection of God's best creatures,—not from weariness, or want of charity,—but from a purer, higher love, have found their rest with God!

Six months after the profession of the four English Sisters of Mercy, they returned to their own country, accompanied by three experienced nuns of the order. If, in the hearts of these Irish sisters, some national regret mingled in this farewell to their own beloved community, it was superseded by the generous wish to add the sacrifice to those already made of home's sweet ices, for the love of Jesus Christ, their Spouse: and with still more devoted feeling, and more sacred tone, they might have sung their native strain,—

‘Though the last glimpse of Erin with sorrow I see,
Yet, wherever Thou art shall seem Erin to me.’

It had been so arranged, that the sisters arrived in Elverton on the eve of the Festival of Our Lady of Mercy, which is the feast of the order. Seven years before, had loud acclamations and peals of welcome greeted the bride, and heiress of the manor, on her return from the continent. She now passed through the main street of the town, and by the lodge-gates of her birth-place, unnoticed, in one of two hired vehicles, which conveyed the humble band to their new convent; but on the former occasion, she had joined in the penitential breathings of the Miserere psalm, while now the song of thanksgiving arose in the hundred and second psalm; and we may well conclude that our Geraldine's soul blessed the Lord, that all within her praised His holy name, and that she forgot not all that He had done for her, in redeeming her life from destruction, and crowning her with mercy and compassion.

Father Bernard, Isabel Lester, and a pious assemblage of aspirants for the veil, awaited their arrival, for solemn benediction and thanksgiving: and on the following morning, after the sad silence of three centuries, the jovous peal and tollings were

heard once more of the "Angelus Domini" from the tower of the Abbey ; and again did consecrated voices send forth their homage to the mysteries of the Incarnation.

The spiritual and corporal works of mercy followed the duties of the choir, and all within and around the Abbey bid fair to realize the motto of the convent,—

"Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Et in terra pax !"

THE END.

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